United Nations E/2002/SR.21

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

22 October 2002

Original: English

Substantive session for 2002
Coordination segment

Provisional summary record of the 21st meeting*
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 11 July 2002, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Kumalo (Vice-President) ..... (South Africa)
later: Ms. Rasi (President) ..... (Finland)

Contents

Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (*continued*)

* No summary record was issued for the 20th meeting.

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02-47637 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (*continued*) (E/2002/12 and Corr.1, 56, 62 and 73)

General discussion (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Pashayev** (Observer for Azerbaijan) said that the new millennium presented challenges and opportunities which required enhanced international cooperation and global solutions. Although new technology and increased economic activity had produced unprecedented change, the solution of problems such as environmental degradation, depletion of natural resources, conflict, terrorism, separatism and trafficking in weapons and human beings would require not only increased North-South and South-South cooperation but also a strengthened international institutional framework, in particular a modern and revitalized United Nations.

2. Unfortunately, follow-up to the Rio Conference and the Millennium Summit had been disappointing, and he expressed the hope that the Monterrey and Johannesburg conferences would mark a turning point in the implementation of conference outcomes. The Council had a vital role to play in that process by engaging all stakeholders in the implementation of measures to promote sustainable development.

3. Adequate financing for development was indispensable to the achievement of universally agreed goals in key development areas. In return, the countries receiving development assistance should take responsibility for their own development through sound economic policies, good governance and respect for human rights. The international community must also ensure the existence of open, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory trading and financial systems. The Council's annual meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions would lay the foundations for cooperation in those areas.

4. Given the important contribution of trade to sustainable development, he welcomed the Doha Round of trade negotiations aimed at the further liberalization of international trade. Special consideration must be given to the problems of developing countries, countries with economies in transition and least developed countries in order to integrate them into the multilateral trade system. Increased interaction between the Council and the World Trade Organization (WTO) was crucial and would strengthen the role of the Council in that process.

5. Drawing attention to the link between trade and transport, he recalled that although Azerbaijan was a landlocked developing country, it was situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. His delegation therefore hoped that the Council would play a more active role in the preparatory process for the International Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Coordination, to be held in Kazakhstan in 2003.

6. The Council should be more proactive in facilitating the dissemination of information and communication technologies (ICT), which could contribute greatly to conservation and environmental protection, with a view to bridging the digital divide and making such technologies more affordable and reliable. He therefore welcomed the establishment of the ICT Task Force and the Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force).

7. There was a clear link between stability, security and economic development, and in view of the violent and protracted nature of current conflicts, the international community should switch from a policy of reaction to a policy of prevention as the most desirable and cost-effective strategy for ensuring lasting peace. Consequently, cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should be strengthened, since the latter, by promoting cooperation and development, contributed to global security. It must also ensure system-wide coordination of development goals through its subsidiary machinery, agencies, funds and programmes.

8. **Mr. Gamaleldin** (Egypt) said he wished to associate himself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and stressed the importance of strengthening and revitalizing the Council as part of the overall reform of the United Nations system. As one of the Organization's principal organs, the Council should strengthen its cooperation with the General Assembly

and the Security Council. He therefore welcomed efforts such as the informal consultations on a draft resolution on an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict, which would foster a new spirit of cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. Efforts to make the work of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly mutually supportive and effective while avoiding duplication would likewise be welcome.

9. The Council played an important coordinating role within the United Nations system, ensuring follow-up to conferences and promoting a common vision and policy framework with a view to translating conference outcomes into action. Monitoring of performance in developing countries at the national level should be complemented by monitoring of the international community's fulfilment of its commitments to support the efforts of developing countries through official development assistance (ODA), enhanced market access, technical assistance and capacity-building.

10. The annual dialogue between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, endorsed by the International Conference on Financing for Development, was a positive step towards ensuring greater coherence and consistency in the work of those institutions, as called for in the Millennium Declaration. The World Bank in particular had made efforts to work more closely with the United Nations. Increased dialogue between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO would also make the international economic environment more favourable for developing countries.

11. Turning to the Council's methods of work, he welcomed the participation of all actors in the deliberations of the Council, as provided for in its rules of procedure. If necessary, additional rules could be developed through consultations between Governments, but any such efforts should be postponed pending the system-wide evaluation undertaken by the General Assembly in the context of global partnerships. Fragmentation or shortening of the Council's substantive session might compromise the Council's political role, and he did not favour separating the humanitarian segment from the substantive session.

12. Although the Council had received a clear mandate in the Monterrey Consensus to consider follow-up in the area of financing for development, he suggested that consideration of the agenda item on integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits should take place during a resumed session of the Council, after the World Summit on Sustainable Development had been held and the Millennium development goals had been considered by the General Assembly. The Council should also help to improve the organization of the United Nations calendar by, inter alia, playing a more active oversight and management role with regard to meetings of the functional commissions, funds and programmes. It should also coordinate United Nations activities at the country level and not limit its focus to policy-level discussions at Headquarters.

13. While he took note of the concerns raised by many delegations from the North and their preference for not having automatic five- and ten-year reviews, he believed that the failure of the World Food Summit to reach any concrete outcomes and the difficulties encountered at the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Bali had shown that multilateral efforts to implement the Millennium Declaration were at best in great danger and at worst an illusion. The world was watching to see whether Governments would reach the Declaration's targets on schedule and allocate the resources called for in the terms of reference for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. If they did not, Johannesburg might be the last international conference for some time. That would deal a serious blow to the credibility of multilateralism and of the United Nations system itself; consequently, his delegation would do everything possible to make the World Summit a success.

14. **Mr. Shin** Boo-nam (Republic of Korea) said that one of the greatest challenges facing the Council was to promote coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. The Millennium Declaration, for example, had outlined economic and social goals around which the Council must rally the resources of the United Nations system, monitor results and conduct progress reviews in order to ensure that the ambitious targets were met. His delegation therefore welcomed the intensified dialogue between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions and

WTO, and believed it would be useful to identify more specific issues for cooperation.

15. The Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development had suggested that the Council should integrate economic, social and environmental aspects of development within the framework of sustainable development. The Council should therefore make it a priority to improve the coordination of operational activities for sustainable development and increase dialogue among its subsidiary bodies and between those bodies and the Council itself.

16. With regard to expansion of the Council's role in conflict prevention and peace-building, he welcomed the Secretary-General's call for the international community to move from a culture of reaction towards a culture of prevention. Bearing in mind the synergies between relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction and long-term development, the Council should assume a greater role in conflict prevention and peace-building. He supported the proposal for the Council to devote the high-level segment of a future substantive session to consideration of the root causes of conflict.

17. In order to respond more swiftly to global developments, the Council should introduce greater flexibility in the scheduling of its sessions; for example, his delegation would support a shortening of the July session to approximately three weeks. He also welcomed the initiative to hold, in alternate years, a high-level two-day meeting on operational activities and one on humanitarian affairs issues. Furthermore, the work of the high-level segment and the coordination segment would be enhanced if the two segments were held back to back and if a single theme or related themes were selected for both segments.

18. It was particularly important to enhance coordination and cooperation between the Council and other United Nations organs, creating a true partnership among the three primary United Nations bodies, which would include a deepening of consultations between the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council. In that connection, he welcomed the participation by the President of the Economic and Social Council in the meeting of the Security Council on Africa. In order to strengthen the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, the Council should adjust the format of its annual report so that the Assembly could undertake more substantive discussions during its plenary meetings.

19. To encourage greater participation by the private sector in its work, especially in the light of the impact of economic globalization, the Council must disseminate its policy outcomes in a timely, effective and far-reaching manner, thus allowing them to be considered in debates and decisions at the national and international levels. The participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must likewise be increased, and he encouraged the Council to institutionalize NGO participation in the high-level segment and to review current procedures for conferring NGO consultative status. His delegation agreed that the coordination segment had been valuable in revitalizing the work of the Council, and the momentum generated by the Millennium Declaration and subsequent conferences should encourage further reform.

20. **Ms. Caridad Balaguer** (Cuba) said that the central role of the Council in dealing with global economic and social issues should be further strengthened, as should its role in ensuring follow-up to major conferences. Recent conferences had recognized the international community's responsibility for dealing with global problems, in particular those facing the developing countries. International commitments must therefore be met in order to help the developing countries eradicate all the ills that afflicted them.

21. Turning to the issue of strengthening the Economic and Social Council, she said that the coordination segment of the substantive session was the appropriate forum for integrated and coordinated analysis of the themes of major conferences with a view to ensuring follow-up. Such analysis could not, however, replace debate on follow-up to those conferences during the general segment, which drew on the reports of the functional commissions.

22. With regard to the Council's methods of work, she did not believe that the coordination segment should be held back-to-back with the high-level segment or that the two segments should share a common theme, since that would diminish the political impact of discussions in the high-level segment and might undermine the work of the coordination segment. The general segment should continue to consider the reports of the functional commissions, so that Council

members could have an opportunity to review the work of those commissions and take action on their recommendations. While the consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies might be useful for reviewing the functioning of those bodies, it could not take the place of those bodies' own reports.

23. Cooperation with the other principal organs of the United Nations should continue, bearing in mind their respective mandates and recognizing the Council's role in the economic and social areas. NGOs should also continue to participate actively in the work of the Organization, and the widest possible representation of NGOs, especially from developing countries, should be ensured.

24. She was concerned that shortening the substantive session might overburden the Council during the rest of the year. Furthermore, although the Monterrey Conference had recommended that the Council should play an increased role in the follow-up to that conference through its annual meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO, that task should continue to be dealt with principally during the general segment, rather than during the coordination segment, which reviewed all conferences.

25. **Ms. Popescu Sandru** (Romania) said that strengthening the Economic and Social Council was an integral part of the process of promoting global strategies for development. The report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the Council (E/2002/62) contained a number of useful suggestions and recommendations. As part of a three-tiered mechanism for the review and follow-up to global conferences, which also included the General Assembly and the functional commissions, the Council had been assigned the task of focusing on thematic issues common to all conferences. A clear division of labour among those three entities would increase the efficiency of the mechanism, and thus her delegation supported the proposal to use the coordination segment to review the cross-cutting topics common to those conferences and summits. The Millennium development goals were a good point around which Member States, United Nations agencies and other international organizations could mobilize. The work of the Council's subsidiary bodies and the funds and programmes must also be monitored.

26. Her delegation believed that it was necessary to increase the impact of the Council's policies at the country level by improving coordination of operational activities in support of sustainable development. The Council's general guidance remained indispensable in further harmonizing and rationalizing common basic development indicators. The Council was also well-placed to forge strategic partnerships for sustainable development by bringing together national and international stakeholders. Developing the high-level dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO, civil society and the private sector was an important way in which the Council could fulfil its role as a catalyst.

27. Development, peace and stability were interrelated. Crises and conflicts consumed resources, caused instability and led to missed opportunities for development. The Council was thus faced with a new challenge: the implementation of conflict prevention and peace-building strategies, including joint consultations with the Security Council.

28. **Mr. Tupy Caldas de Moura** (Brazil) said that the creation of the ICT Task Force and the high-level meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions were two important initiatives the Council had recently launched which deserved to be highlighted. ICT was a tool for development rather than a reward, and the Task Force should help to narrow the digital divide. The meetings between the international financial institutions and the Council had gained even greater relevance after the Monterrey Conference, where the need for close cooperation had become evident. The Council had also enhanced its cooperation with civil society, NGOs and the private sector.

29. In providing integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations summits and conferences, it was important to avoid duplication and tap into potential synergies. However, the coordination exercise should not come at the expense of follow-up to individual conferences. It was also important to improve cooperation between the Council and other principal organs and the oversight of its subsidiary machinery. There must be greater coherence between the agenda of the Council and that of the General Assembly, the Second and Third Committees in particular, and cooperation with the Security Council in such areas as post-conflict peace-building should be considered.

30. In order to accomplish its coordination tasks, the Council must improve its working methods. The high-level segment had succeeded in drawing attention, but that was unfortunately not true for the other segments. The coordination segment could concentrate on follow-up to major conferences and summits. The operational activities and humanitarian affairs segments could also consider holding high-level meetings at a time other than the substantive session, which would attract more attention without overburdening its agenda. Finally, the general segment could concentrate on the reports of subsidiary bodies. Such measures would strengthen the Council and contribute to the achievement of the goals established by the major conferences, but they would not succeed unless they were supported by strong political will.

31. **Mr. Amman** (Observer for Indonesia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Council had to act as a catalyst by bringing together all actors in the implementation of the outcome of major conferences; it must also ensure that globalization became a positive force for all. Those challenges required the Council to function in a more flexible, innovative and timely manner. Lessons learned and best practices should be taken into consideration, and strategic partnerships among the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO should be enhanced.

32. The issue of coordinated follow-up to the major conferences and summits should become a standing item on the agenda of the coordination segment. In addition, a cross-cutting theme should be identified for the high-level segment, which would further enhance implementation of conference outcomes. Further review of the current format, purpose and scope of coordination meetings was needed, as was a more ambitious agenda for the annual high-level meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions. Dialogue and consultation should be shifted from principles to implementation and action. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's recommendation to intensify the intergovernmental preparatory process for those meetings, which should have an agreed agenda.

33. In the follow-up to the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, the key challenge to the Council would be to enhance its coordination role while integrating the economic, social and environmental aspects of the outcome into the topics for the various segments of its sessions. The Council should promote the mainstreaming of the concept of sustainability in the work of the United Nations system.

34. **Mr. García González** (El Salvador) said that his delegation agreed with the general views expressed during the discussion of the role and functions of the Council and also on the need to continue and pursue the reform process. It supported the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report (E/2002/62), in particular the suggestion to shorten the length of the substantive session. Those proposals should be considered in conjunction with the review of the decision-making process within the Council, which must become more flexible. Although consensus was the preferred method, it could lead to a repetition of texts agreed at other conferences or summits, creating an illusion of progress when none had actually been made.

35. The Council should play a more active role in peace-building and conflict prevention, which would not be possible under current conditions. The reform process must therefore continue and, in particular, sessions should be made more flexible. In that connection, his Government commended the efforts of the Secretariat to develop a long-term programme of support for Haiti (E/2002/56). His Government would contribute to the reform of the Council, which it considered essential in creating the conditions for achievement of the goals set at the Millennium Summit and the Monterrey Conference.

36. **Mr. Langmore** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that, given the extent and severity of human deprivation, the enormity of the inequities in income, wealth and access to political power and the vulnerability of increasingly integrated global economic and social systems to disorder and instability, the potential importance of the Council's role was greater than ever. However, the unsatisfactory chasm between purpose and performance meant that revitalization was essential.

37. The main problem was that the Council did not address global economic and social issues decisively or in a timely way. One way to increase its effectiveness would be to hold meetings during the year whenever they were needed, in order to maximize the timeliness of response. The annual meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions would be more interesting if

specific issues were discussed and would have more value if held before the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

38. One of the goals set in the Charter for both the Organization and the Council was full employment, yet that goal received too little attention on the international scene. One way to remedy that would be to include ILO among the agencies participating in the special high-level meetings. The report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, established by ILO in 2002, would be available by the end of 2003 and would provide an ideal theme for the high-level segment to be held in July 2004. Employment growth was sufficiently important to become one of the Council's central concerns.

39. **Ms. Freudenschuss-Reichl** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that UNIDO was eager to intensify its cooperation with the Council by making its analytical resources more fully available. The United Nations system would benefit from more effective orchestration of its analytical capacity so that resources for background documentation could be exploited on the basis of comparative advantage. The success of the International Conference on Financing for Development was due largely to an inclusive participatory process that had drawn on the best available input from various stakeholders, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, the private sector and civil society. It was thus a matter of concern that the Secretary-General's recommendations for Conference follow-up (E/2002/62, paras. 40-43) made no reference to the participation of specialized agencies. However, the proposal to hold joint meetings or exchanges with the boards of specialized agencies and funds and programmes to discuss follow-up of the Millennium Declaration, Monterrey Consensus and the outcome of the Johannesburg Summit (para. 62) was most welcome, as was the proposal to create a "development cooperation forum" (para. 65).

40. The Council had an important role to play in bringing together the various development constituencies. However, since the practicalities of integrated follow-up to major conferences were too complex, the Council should focus at each of its sessions on a few critical issues pre-selected by the Secretariat.

41. UNIDO was particularly keen to assist in the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict and to share its experience in that area.

42. **Mr. Sharma** (Nepal) welcomed the improvements that had been made in the Council's functioning but said it was important to pursue the revitalization process with a sense of renewed urgency. The Council must cease to be a debating forum and should start to lead global efforts for sustainable development, poverty eradication and peace. Procedural bottlenecks and structural impediments remained, and the Council must be equipped with the tools and authority it needed to fulfil its mandate.

43. Several ideas for further strengthening the Council had emerged from the Secretary-General's report and from the panel discussions. For example, need, rather than convenience, should dictate the number of meetings, which should be short and focused. The Council should also be able to meet at short notice, and the Bureau should be given added authority to act on its behalf. Collaboration with the Security Council and the General Assembly must be based on agreed modi operandi to avoid confusion and duplication. Moreover, the Council should provide leadership in the follow-up to international conferences by offering policy guidance and coordinating the efforts of multiple stakeholders, including the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO. It should also be involved in broadly monitoring implementation. The Council must also ensure that its conclusions were reflected in the policies and strategies of collaborating agencies.

44. Global development compacts were waiting to be implemented, calling for energy and resources and the harnessing of existing mechanisms, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. At the Council's sessions, thematic round tables and panel discussions should be more focused. There should also be more emphasis on thematic and cross-cutting issues so that policy and field inputs could be more effectively articulated. Although change was needed in the architecture of the Council's substantive sessions, the existing frequency of sessions should be preserved and greater linkage between segments ensured.

45. **Mr. Husain** (Organization of the Islamic Conference) said that certain coordination issues

described in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2002/62) were pertinent to his own organization. The gap between policy guidance and the day-to-day work of the United Nations system at the national level struck a particular chord. The question of how the Council's work could be made more efficient was thus one of mutual concern.

46. Intergovernmental organizations such as his own could enrich the Council's comprehensive reviews of progress in follow-up to major United Nations summits and conferences by sharing their own experience in that regard. The Council might also consider more effective roles for relevant intergovernmental organizations to complement its work in their areas of competence.

47. He wished to reiterate his organization's interest in contributing to the implementation of the Secretary-General's proposals towards improving coordination between the Council and intergovernmental organizations.

48. **Ms. Bloem** (Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO)) welcomed the Secretary-General's emphasis on moving from commitments to implementation and said that the Council was the right body to coordinate follow-up to the major conferences. It should also remain a strong advocate for social concerns and ensure that human rights were a firm underpinning for development goals.

49. Civil society organizations had made a substantial contribution to the formulation and adoption of the Millennium Declaration and should be fully involved in all follow-up mechanisms. CONGO had organized activities to mobilize NGOs to that end at the regional, national and grass-roots levels.

50. In order to overcome widespread scepticism, particularly among civil society, that United Nations goals were being set but never met, she recommended that the Council should use the Millennium development goals as an important framework for its development agenda but identify more immediate goals and targets that could be achieved within current political mandates. Civil society should also be included in the awareness-raising campaign and ongoing monitoring process for the Millennium goals.

51. To ensure policy coherence and give the Council more authority, the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO should be brought into the United Nations system and their reporting to the Council made both mandatory and accountable.

52. The Council should also become more involved in the prevention of armed conflict, including by establishing the proposed advisory group on African countries. Some NGOs had recommended that the Council should also be more proactive by intervening and protecting against armed conflict and terrorism, establishing specific programmes against the negative effects of globalization, taking strong positions against corruption and better promoting itself to NGOs and the world. It would also help strengthen the Council if the terms of Office of the President and Bureau were extended. The Council might also consider establishing a "mediation committee" to act in the event that decisions from one United Nations body appeared to conflict with decisions from others, or to set priorities between various human rights.

53. It was the mutual desire of the Council and the NGOs in consultative status with it that nominal or formal relationships should be enhanced to achieve genuine consultation. The involvement of CONGO and other NGOs in the preparation and realization of the high-level segment was most welcome in that connection. Similar modalities should also, however, be applied to other segments. Strengthening NGO participation strengthened the Council, since it created a stronger link with the peoples of the world. Accordingly, the Council should seek NGO input more actively. It should also be more authoritative in r..aking its rules for NGO participation applicable to all meetings within the United Nations system.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.

United Nations E/2002/SR.22

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

11 October 2002

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Substantive session for 2002
Coordination segment

Provisional summary record of the 22nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 12 July 2002, at 4 p.m.

President: Ms. Rasi (Vice-President) ..... (Finland)

Contents

Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (*continued*)

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02-48010 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4.15 p.m.

Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (*continued*) (E/2002/12 and Corr.1, 56, 62 and 73)

1. **Mr. Shumaina** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, in addition to discharging the functions specified in the Charter, the Council now had to work to achieve the Millennium development goals. That required broad cooperation among all partners concerned; the consensus achieved at the International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey had given a powerful stimulus to the Council in achieving the objectives of the Millennium Summit.

2. It was not enough to define objectives and pass resolutions; following them up and implementing them were crucial. The international community should pull together to confront the challenges to sustainable development, including conflicts throughout Africa. His country attached particular importance to ending conflicts in the African continent and had played an important role in that regard and in reducing tension. It was convinced that the attainment of security and peace would create a climate conducive to stability and sustainable development. The establishment of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on African countries emerging from conflict was an important step in the right direction. In that context, he noted the agreements reached by African leaders at their conference held in Durban on 8 and 9 July 2002 at which the creation of the African Union was announced. An important body of the Union, the African Peace and Security Council, together with the African peacekeeping force would play an effective role in ending conflicts in Africa and preventing them from breaking out. That role was entirely in keeping with the efforts of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, to establish stability and sustainable development in Africa.

3. His delegation hoped that that important step would be welcomed by the United Nations and the international community, and that support would be provided to the Economic and Social Council, as the major body responsible for coordinating the work of other United Nations organs. It trusted that efforts to ensure follow-up of the agreements that had emerged from recent conferences and meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations would also receive support.

4. **Ms. Kusorgbor** (Ghana) observed that the daunting task of reducing poverty and promoting evenly distributed socio-economic development had been further complicated by globalization. It was therefore imperative to strengthen the Council's role within the wider United Nations system, a question best addressed, however, after the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development.

5. The need for more and better interaction with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization was essential if the Council was to help achieve the Millennium development goals. Subsequent meetings between the Council and those institutions should be carefully prepared in advance and should focus specifically on those goals and the outcomes of the other major United Nations conferences.

6. Equally pivotal was effective cooperation between the Council and the other two principal organs of the United Nations: the General Assembly and the Security Council. The involvement of civil society must also not be overlooked, and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to participate more in United Nations activities. Furthermore, a strengthened relationship between the Council and its functional commissions was critical; a mechanism to improve the Council's oversight and management of its subsidiary bodies would curtail duplication and excess and would facilitate a well-coordinated, system-wide consideration of all economic and social issues.

7. Poverty reduction and conflict prevention were two sides of the same coin, and her delegation endorsed the recommendation in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2002/12 and Corr.1) for establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict, which would complement the broad-based activities under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). If more effort was put into conflict prevention, there would be less need for peacekeeping missions, relief programmes and the reconstruction of States.

8. **Ms. Loemban Tobing-Klein** (Suriname) said that the observer for Venezuela, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, had highlighted the need to

strengthen the Council's role in coordination of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and to make the Council more effective. Moreover, the new challenges involving peace-building and conflict prevention, in addition to the Council's various other responsibilities specifically within its mandate, had been set out in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2002/62). During the past six months, the Council Bureau and secretariat had done their utmost to make Member States aware of the Council's enormous potential. Other commendable initiatives had included the high-level round tables on education, health and human resources and the dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions.

9. Her delegation agreed that there should be a strong and effective partnership between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, for without the work of civil society, the Organization's noble goals would not be realized.

10. The enlightening panel presentations and discussions during the operational activities segment of the current session had shown that the Council was on the right track and must continue to make an impact in the daily lives of people, particularly in those countries where the vulnerable majorities lived below the poverty level. In order to mobilize the necessary level of funding for the attainment of social and economic goals, the process of reform within the Council had to be completed as soon as possible. Her delegation favoured the proposed extension of the membership in the Council to all Member States.

11. The report of the Secretary-General on the long-term programme of support for Haiti (E/2002/56), a fellow Caribbean country, provided an overview of the situation since 2001 in relation to difficulties encountered and improvements made. The main point to retain was that Haiti needed help and that better-coordinated operational activities by the United Nations under the long-term programme were in the best interests of its people.

12. **Mr. Holubov** (Ukraine) said that the effectiveness of the Council's work depended on strengthening its role as the central coordinating body of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields. It should be equipped to provide more guidance on follow-up to the major United Nations conferences by taking a coordinated approach to achieving the internationally agreed goals.

13. A mechanism should be established that made full use of the Council in the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development. Future Council meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions should focus on mobilizing all types of resources in implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. One of the major challenges was to help bring the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders together in a systematic dialogue. Broadening its outreach, the Council should involve national policy makers and civil society more closely in its own activities. Overall policy coherence should be ensured by integrating the economic, social and environmental aspects of development, particularly in the context of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The progress towards the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development goals should be measured in a consistent and unified way, and the Council should thus encourage the harmonization, under the leadership of the Statistical Commission, of the specific indicators used by the United Nations.

14. A key element in the reform of the Council was to improve its ability to oversee and manage its subsidiary bodies. It should, for example, more closely review the proposals of its functional commissions, and encourage them to work together substantively in order to avoid duplication.

15. While it should operate within its mandate, the Council should not be isolated from other core activities of the United Nations. Its potential for collaboration with the General Assembly and the Security Council in conflict prevention and peace-building should be explored. The Council should assist in the development of conflict-prevention strategies by analysing how the economic and social root causes of conflict could be addressed. Given its institutional capacity, the Council could help organize regional conflict-prevention initiatives and mobilize support for peace-building in specific countries.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

United Nations E/2002/SR.23

Economic and Social Council

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14 October 2002

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Substantive session for 2002
Coordination, operational activities and humanitarian affairs segments

Provisional summary record of the 23rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 15 July 2002, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Šimonović ..... (Croatia)
later: Mr. Buallay (Vice-President) ..... (Bahrain)

Contents

Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration *(continued)*

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration *(continued)* (E/2002/L.12)

Draft resolution E/2002/L.12

1. **The President** invited the Council to adopt draft resolution E/2002/L.12, entitled "Ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflicts".

2. *Draft resolution E/2002/L.12 was adopted.*

3. **Ms. Starbaek Christensen** (Observer for Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union supported the establishment of the new ad hoc advisory groups and, in particular, the flexible, time-limited approach taken and the stipulation that such groups would be created only at the request of the countries concerned. She looked forward to reviewing implementation of the mechanism once it had been put into practice.

4. **Mr. Carpio Govea** (Observer for Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the negotiations leading to the draft resolution's adoption had been among the most constructive in which he had participated. The ad hoc advisory groups were an innovative mechanism in the service of peace and development that would be of great benefit to Africa and might also serve as a model for future assistance to other regions.

5. **The President** said that the Council was mandated by the Charter of the United Nations to coordinate the activities of the agencies, funds and programmes in the areas of humanitarian assistance, economic and social reconstruction and development, and human rights, which were at the heart of peace-building. Recently, it had enhanced its cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector; however, more could be done, and the ad hoc advisory groups would provide an opportunity to mobilize those key players.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (A/57/77-E/2002/63)

6. **The President** said that the issues of disaster-preparedness and recovery, complex emergencies, and relief and development were part of a larger picture. For example, in most cases, humanitarian coordinators also served as resident coordinators for development cooperation and, increasingly, as deputy special representatives of the Secretary-General. A key issue for the humanitarian segment would be the Council's timely response to humanitarian and, perhaps, other emergencies throughout the year.

7. *Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

8. **The President** said that it was important to ensure a close link between the two main themes of the humanitarian segment: natural disaster relief and the transition from relief to development. Once the critical phase of an emergency had passed, development must follow so that the victims were not condemned to live endlessly on the charity of others.

9. He recalled that the Council had decided that the final outcome of the segment should take the form of a draft resolution rather than agreed conclusions, as had been the case in 2001. Briefings would be held on emergency preparedness, protection of civilians in armed conflict and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

10. **Mr. Oshima** (Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/57/77-E/2002/63). By bringing together the various stakeholders — beneficiaries, donors, bilateral and international aid organizations, United Nations agencies and NGO partners — the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) ensured that assistance reached those in need. How such responses were coordinated depended on whether the situation involved a natural disaster, a conflict-related humanitarian crisis or both.

11. The countries affected by disasters and crises bore the major burden of response and therefore possessed the experience on which future action must be built. During the past year, he had focused on

improving coordination with developing countries, particularly those affected by disasters and emergencies, and on promoting systematic dialogue with the Group of 77 and China on the issues of natural disasters, information management and regional cooperation.

12. It was difficult to organize a response to crises without a clear understanding of the available support. His Office had worked with the donor community to establish aid coordination mechanisms, particularly in the context of the consolidated appeals process, and had discussed the development of agreed performance indicators as a way of improving accountability and overall response to natural disasters.

13. The events of 11 September 2001 had further emphasized the need for greater integration within the United Nations system and closer cooperation with NGO partners, Governments and, where necessary, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The past year had also offered opportunities for resolving some longstanding complex humanitarian emergencies, including those in Afghanistan, Angola and Sri Lanka. The principles of impartiality, neutrality and humanity, embodied in General Assembly resolution 46/182, had stood the test of time. That resolution also stressed the responsibility of States to provide assistance and the right of affected populations to receive it.

14. He had recently returned from a mission to Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia, where the impact of drought was placing over 12 million people at risk of hunger and long-term destitution. Ten years previously, a massive relief effort had averted a similar crisis in the same region; however, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, aggravated by political and economic factors, had robbed Southern Africa of key human resources in vital sectors. A major crisis could be averted through effective regional coordination and timely donor support, but the window of opportunity might be limited to a few months. He would soon seek Council members' support in the context of the Regional Appeal for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa. It was also important to build on the work of regional bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

15. His subsequent mission to Angola had left him with both a sense of hope and an acute awareness of the remaining challenges. More than a quarter of the population had been forced from their homes during one of the world's longest-running conflicts; the recent ceasefire agreement had provided access to many of those victims for the first time in years, and the humanitarian community was struggling to serve 3 million people rather than the 1.9 million it had been assisting in early 2002. Coordination with the Government would be needed, particularly as the international community expected the Government to assume a greater burden of humanitarian aid, rehabilitation and reconstruction in order to consolidate peace and national reconciliation.

16. He had visited Afghanistan and its neighbours both before and after the events of 11 September 2001. The humanitarian situation there had improved somewhat, but tens of thousands of people were still vulnerable. The challenge was to ensure that all parts of the country continued to receive assistance in a rapidly changing environment, and the establishment of the new transitional authority made it necessary for relief efforts to support capacity-building and provide information services. His Office had also participated in the creation of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and, within that framework, had provided relief to that country.

17. In 2001, the lives of some 170 million people worldwide had been disrupted by natural disasters. A rapid response to the volcanic eruption in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had been made possible by the specialist resources of the peacekeeping operation in that country. However, 80 per cent of the response to natural disasters came from the community or country affected, which was why the United Nations must support national and local response capacities. Accordingly, the number of regional disaster response advisers, who would work closely with regional and national organizations, had been increased.

18. The increasing impact of natural disasters such as the recent floods in China that had affected 57 million people, could destroy or limit economic development in many parts of the world, particularly in developing countries. He planned to give greater priority to disaster risk management and to strengthen partnerships with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in order to ensure better synergy between disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response.

19. The Secretary-General and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee had taken allegations of the sexual abuse and exploitation of refugees and internally displaced persons in West Africa extremely seriously. The Standing Committee had agreed to establish standards of behaviour with clear management responsibilities and recourse mechanisms, and it was important that those initiatives should be put into practice.

20. Turning to the issues on which the Council had requested him to report, he announced that an independent review of humanitarian funding patterns had been completed in April 2002 and could be consulted on ReliefWeb. The review had shown that although there was a decline in the share of global humanitarian assistance that was channelled through the consolidated appeals process, that process was still perceived as providing the common framework for humanitarian assistance. He therefore urged greater donor coordination and engagement as a means of improving its effectiveness. A more comprehensive picture of humanitarian needs and assistance flows could be achieved by expanding the current financial tracking system to include all forms of humanitarian assistance; however, financial information would have to be provided by all partners, including Governments and NGOs.

21. The Unit on Internal Displacement within his Office had received sufficient funding to begin its work with staff seconded from humanitarian organizations. The Unit had visited and reviewed a number of countries, including Afghanistan, Liberia and Uganda, with a view to strengthening the system-wide response through improved mechanisms for the protection of internally displaced persons. The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group had developed international standards for the provision of urban search and rescue assistance and had been seeking more formal endorsement from Member States of mechanisms to improve cooperation and coordination in that field.

22. The Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations represented another effort to mobilize support for emergency communications. The Convention had to be ratified by 17 more Member States by 21 June 2003 in order to enter into force, and he urged States to become parties as soon as possible. The Convention would greatly improve the immediate response to natural disasters and the flow of assistance when speed was essential to saving lives.

23. **Mr. Motomura** (Japan) said that the humanitarian activities of the United Nations system must be carried out in strict compliance with the guiding principles set out by the General Assembly, which included impartiality and neutrality. He was pleased to note that the coordination mechanism for those activities had improved steadily over the past decade, as his Government believed that institutional memory and lessons learned were very important in such efforts.

24. Japan had centuries of experience of coping with natural disasters, and it therefore attached great importance to the problem they posed. His Government supported efforts to expand participation by developing countries in United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams, with a view to enhancing national disaster-response efforts. His Government also attached great importance to the search and rescue guidelines prepared by the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and welcomed the ongoing review. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that disaster risk assessments should be integrated with reduction strategies in national and regional planning.

25. The international community needed to focus on the protection of civilians during armed conflicts and he welcomed the convening of regional workshops on the matter by OCHA. Japan was concerned at the plight of the growing number of internally displaced persons; it was providing the Unit on Internal Displacement with financial support and was considering ways of assisting the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons. Also disturbing were the allegations of sexual abuse against United Nations humanitarian workers; the victims should receive speedy assistance, and the activities of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in that area would be closely monitored.

26. The international community must strive to make the transition from relief to development smooth. The Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People had been a positive step in that direction, and more active involvement of the international financial institutions would facilitate that effort.

27. Funding for humanitarian activities, especially in the case of "forgotten crises", must be continuous. However, a feasible strategy with priorities and realistic funding levels was essential to good donor response. The consolidated appeals process could be strengthened by involving NGOs more closely in the formulation of the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) and developing a fund-tracking system to promote knowledge of funding in humanitarian crises.

28. **Mr. Negrín** (Mexico) said that his country's experience of natural disasters had led it to attach great importance to emergency humanitarian assistance. Mexico's approach had been to strengthen its national civil protection structure by focusing on prevention and establishing a disaster-relief fund. It had also developed an international cooperation policy which assisted disaster-stricken countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and had sought to raise the profile of the issue on the international stage.

29. The report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/57/77-E/2002/63) provided a solid basis for analysis and the coordination of assistance. His delegation believed that a number of points were particularly important: the need for a prevention and early-warning system for armed conflicts and natural disasters; the targeting of assistance for vulnerable groups; the need for efficient and unbureaucratic coordination among United Nations agencies; local capacity-building; and the identification of strategies for the transition from relief to development.

30. Humanitarian emergencies caused by natural disasters and conflict were becoming more frequent and had a disproportionate effect on developing countries in terms of economic cost and loss of life. It was therefore unfortunate that the Council's substantive sessions had been unable to reach any agreement on that issue in the previous two years, or to keep it in a prominent place on both the international and the Council's agendas.

31. As in the past, the draft resolution for the humanitarian affairs segment was the subject of difficult negotiations. The text had to reconcile the humanitarian assistance principles adopted by consensus in General Assembly resolution 46/182 and relatively new phenomena which affected millions of people but lacked a legal framework. Reaching agreement at the current session would go some way to helping the victims of armed conflict and natural disasters.

32. **Ms. Løj** (Observer for Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and also Iceland, said that a central task for the Council's humanitarian affairs segment was the establishment of general guidelines for United Nations humanitarian activities. The European Union therefore welcomed the decision to have the segment conclude with the adoption of a resolution that would provide such guidance.

33. Humanitarian operations often involved many and diverse participants and were conducted with limited funds. That made it logical for the United Nations to coordinate such efforts, as called for in General Assembly resolution 46/182.

34. She welcomed the increasing focus on crisis prevention by addressing the root causes of crises and on closing the gap between emergency relief and longer-term development. What was needed, however, was continued dynamism and commitment, and in some cases a clearer division of labour and greater cooperation. National capacity-building was also vital, as long-term sustainability was impossible without it. Local communities and institutions must be fully involved in that effort, and human rights should be promoted in order to ensure stability.

35. The United Nations Disaster and Coordination (UNDAC) system established by OCHA made it possible to provide a coordinated response in emergencies, and it deserved and required the support of all United Nations agencies. The European Union was aware of the need to coordinate its own efforts to strengthen its crisis-management capacity with the United Nations in order to support the wider international response led by the Organization.

36. The European Union supported ongoing efforts in the United Nations system to meet the needs of internally displaced persons effectively and comprehensively through such means as the dissemination and implementation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Similarly, in the light of the commitment made by the international community in the Millennium Declaration, the European Union was providing host countries with

assistance. It welcomed the attention being given to the most vulnerable refugees and displaced persons, who included women, children, the elderly and the disabled.

37. The safety and security of staff engaged in humanitarian assistance was of major concern to the European Union. She urged all concerned to abide by international humanitarian law and welcomed the entry into force of the Statute of the International Criminal Court. The European Union would continue its efforts to eradicate anti-personnel mines and to alleviate the suffering caused by those weapons.

38. As a major provider of humanitarian aid, the European Union actively supported the consolidated appeals process and encouraged all partners to participate actively in it, particularly in view of the current uneven pattern of funding. The existing financial tracking system for humanitarian assistance did not provide an adequate overview of the situation and broadening its coverage would improve the coordination of assistance. The organizations of the United Nations system had a responsibility to attract sufficient funding by delivering rapid, high-quality humanitarian assistance with greater transparency and accountability and substantiated results.

39. **Mr. Brazhnikov** (Russian Federation) drew attention to the serious humanitarian situation in the Northern Caucasus and thanked those donors who had provided assistance in that area. Especially since the events of 11 September 2001, there was an increased need for disaster-preparedness and disaster response. Since natural and man-made disasters often had far-reaching effects that transcended national borders, a more coordinated response was needed. He welcomed the proposals for improving the local response capacity of OCHA and humanitarian agencies and for strengthening OCHA presence in disaster-prone areas. The basic principles of humanitarian aid set out in General Assembly resolution 46/182 should be respected.

40. Currently, one of the most pressing issues was coping with the needs of internally displaced persons, yet there was no international instrument for dealing with such persons or even a single definition of that category of individuals. However, the United Nations system had built up considerable experience in dealing with displaced persons and he urged that all international efforts in that domain should reflect the fundamental principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, impartiality and lack of political bias.. The primary obligation and responsibility for protecting and assisting internally displaced persons however, lay with national Governments and such protection based on a combination of national legislation and international human rights law. Moreover, the entire humanitarian community must be guaranteed access to the most vulnerable in order to help them.

41. As the experience of post-conflict situations had demonstrated, the successful transition from relief to development was vital to peace-building, and should be the focus of the Council's attention. Concerted international action under the leadership of the United Nations was essential. All participants should also have a "standby capacity", similar to that of OCHA, that could be utilized immediately. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee was an important forum for recommending improvements to the humanitarian response to emergencies and to the implementation of the consolidated appeals process.

42. Planning and programming in the early stages of humanitarian operations were essential, as the Secretary-General's report made clear, and would contribute to peace-building and stability. Another vital task was involving the local population in humanitarian assistance and transitional programmes. The report had also recommended using the consolidated appeals process to combine relief efforts with reconstruction and development activities. It was therefore unfortunate that donors were directing fewer resources through the consolidated appeals process and more through bilateral NGO channels. The Russian Federation continued to advocate the establishment of an international agency on emergency situations, as it believed that such an organization would improve the use of existing capacities.

43. **Mr. Mamed-Guliyev** (Observer for Azerbaijan) said that his delegation wished to focus particularly on humanitarian emergencies caused by armed conflicts, which resulted in forced displacement, human suffering and economic, social and environmental problems. Chief among the victims of such conflicts were internally displaced persons, women, children and the elderly. Addressing the needs of the internally displaced demanded a comprehensive approach: timely and targeted humanitarian assistance and an improved international legal framework. Ultimately, however, the internally displaced could only return to their homes if

the conflict that had caused them to flee was settled; until that stage was reached, the volume of humanitarian aid should not decrease.

44. The establishment by the Emergency Relief Coordinator of an inter-agency Unit on Internal Displacement was a welcome step that would help to ensure that protracted or forgotten crises involving internal displacement, such as those in Angola, Burundi, Indonesia, Nigeria or Somalia, received attention. His delegation hoped that the Unit would also address internal displacement in Azerbaijan.

45. In contemporary armed conflicts, women and children become the main targets, as they were frequently taken hostage and subjected to violence and abuse. That was why Azerbaijan had sponsored resolutions in the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights that sought to address those problems.

46. Complex humanitarian emergencies required a holistic approach. Closer cooperation between international agencies and between Governments was crucial. All aspects — political, economic, legal and humanitarian — of such emergencies needed to be considered, and he welcomed the increasingly important role played by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in that regard. Dealing with complex emergencies was not easy, but that task had to be completed before progressing to the next stage: the no less challenging task of achieving the transition from relief to development.

47. **Ms. Pulido** (Observer for Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the fact that the current segment would produce an outcome in which the views of Member States would be reflected, particularly those of developing countries. That marked an important step towards increasing understanding among stakeholders on issues relating to humanitarian assistance. Her delegation also welcomed the decision to consider the question of strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance, with particular attention paid to reaching vulnerable groups and to the transition from relief to development.

48. The guiding principles contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 should continue to play a central role in the efficient and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. The primary responsibility for initiating, organizing, coordinating and implementing humanitarian assistance lay with affected States; there was, therefore, an imperative need for capacity-building at the local and national levels, allowing for better coordination and closer cooperation with the United Nations system and humanitarian organizations. States in need of humanitarian assistance were called upon to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations, in particular the provision of food, medicines, shelter and health care, for which access to the victims was essential. Capacity-building at all levels would also have a favourable effect on the development of strong early-warning and preparedness measures.

49. Internal conflicts in some developing countries, especially in Africa, had consumed most of those countries' human and material resources and devastated their economic infrastructure and social fabric. That situation had in turn constrained those countries' capacity to cope with natural disasters and their devastating impact on the population. A very high percentage of disaster victims lived in developing countries. Accordingly, much higher levels of attention and assistance were required from United Nations agencies and other humanitarian actors in the field. She welcomed efforts by the United Nations to become better prepared to respond to humanitarian emergencies.

50. Despite all those efforts, the challenge of coordinating humanitarian activities within the United Nations system as well as addressing complex emergencies in a timely, adequate and efficient manner still remained to be met. Another serious challenge was that of funding for rapid response. She welcomed the proposal presented by the Secretary-General in his report for the development of a global humanitarian financial tracking system. Her delegation had noted with concern the drastic decline in flows of humanitarian assistance through the consolidated appeals process. That situation must be reversed if the international community was to respond swiftly and effectively to humanitarian crises. Funding was also a challenge in the context of the transition from relief to development, which in turn was intimately related to national capacity-building. Investment in development activities that would promote self-reliance and stability in the countries affected must be considered during the planning phase of humanitarian assistance programmes.

51. Recipient and donor countries, the United Nations system and humanitarian organizations must work

together to provide much-needed support in both humanitarian and development fields. She called on the United Nations system and the international community to strengthen their efforts to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to civilians, particularly those under foreign occupation, and to undertake the necessary efforts to end such occupation so that all peoples of the world could enjoy their fundamental human rights in dignity and peace.

52. Attention should be given to the particular vulnerability of persons with disabilities in situations of complex emergencies and natural disasters. It was also important to take into account, at all phases of the planning and delivery of humanitarian assistance, the particular problems faced by women, including sexual violence, abuse, trafficking and exploitation. The Group of 77 and China were in favour of all the efforts of the United Nations system to ensure that cases of sexual abuse committed by humanitarian workers against women and children did not recur.

53. **Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga** (Observer for Ecuador) said that climate change had become the main factor responsible for the growing frequency and intensity of natural disasters. Extreme weather events had doubled in the past five years, and if that trend was not countered with aggressive disaster-reduction measures, more than 100,000 people would die by the year 2015 and the direct economic losses would exceed US$ 300 billion annually. The environmental impact of such disasters would also become more severe, largely as a result of the loss of water, forests and biodiversity.

54. Poverty was the main reason for people's increasing exposure to natural risks and hazards. Indeed, poverty was responsible for an over-exploitation of natural resources, increased environmental degradation, accelerated and unplanned urbanization and a marked lack of investment in basic infrastructure, which led natural risks and hazards to turn into natural disasters. The poor, always the most adversely affected by such disasters, were thereby condemned to greater hardships and even fewer opportunities, with deepening social inequality.

55. Those facts should constitute the basis for a clear definition of priorities within the United Nations. Although international response mechanisms had improved markedly in recent years, there was still much scope for more effective coordination. It must be borne in mind that disaster response and relief efforts in general were not enough; activities aimed at reducing vulnerability and minimizing natural hazards on an ongoing basis should constitute a priority and should be supported by international cooperation.

56. When addressing disaster risk-reduction it was particularly important to consider the transboundary nature of natural hazards. Accordingly, the development and implementation of regional and international activities such as capacity-building, technology transfers and the development of early-warning systems should be given priority. By way of example, Ecuador was committed to international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon, and an international centre for the study of that phenomenon was scheduled to be opened in Guayaquil in November 2002.

57. **Mr. Gamaleldin** (Egypt) said that the provision of humanitarian assistance in the event of natural or man-made disasters, such as wars, was an essential task of the international community. Among the main challenges in that area were ensuring that all parties in an armed struggle respected the rights of civilians by complying with international humanitarian law and ensuring that the requisite coordination existed between United Nations bodies and that they cooperated with all other parties involved in providing humanitarian assistance, so that the civilian population had access to assistance, in accordance with the principles set forth in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182. Humanitarian assistance must be provided to civilians by agreement with the States concerned or at their request, and with full respect for their sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. The situation was particularly difficult if a State lacked a central Government able to impose order throughout its territory. The General Assembly should therefore define, in a transparent manner and with the cooperation of all States, the steps the Organization should take in such cases. His delegation welcomed the fact that the current humanitarian segment was concentrating on access to vulnerable groups, especially women and children, in the context of international efforts to protect civilians in armed conflict and supported the efforts being made to strengthen search and rescue activities in populated areas in the event of disasters.

58. He endorsed the international community's appeal to all States and parties involved in conflicts to respect the rights of civilians and to fulfil their

obligations under international law, particularly the Geneva Conventions. Civilians must not become the victims of efforts to achieve political or military objectives or be treated as "human shields". The same standards must be applied in all cases, since the principles of international law were binding on all States, irrespective of size. He also endorsed the appeal by the Secretary-General for the establishment of a culture of protection in respect of civilians in armed conflicts and called for wide-ranging international consultations to define the implications of that important concept and ways in which it could be given practical effect.

59. In considering humanitarian assistance, the Council must not overlook conflicts arising from foreign occupation. In that connection, he appealed to the international community to address the humanitarian catastrophe being faced by the Palestinian people, both to afford protection to that people and to save the peace process in the Middle East. Israel's actions in the Palestinian territories had led to a humanitarian disaster there, bringing about the complete collapse of territories' political, economic, humanitarian and environmental infrastructure. An enormous number of civilians had been killed, buildings had been demolished, the population displaced and property destroyed. The delivery of international assistance had also been thwarted. The Palestinian people merely sought to enjoy its natural right to independence and freedom and the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council, the principles agreed at the Madrid Conference and the principle of land for peace. The establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on the equal right to security and on respect for international resolutions was the only way to end the bloodshed on both sides and to ensure a better future for the Palestinian and Israeli people. He paid a tribute to the work being done by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and urged donor countries to increase their support to the efforts of UNRWA and other organizations that were working to assist the Palestinian people. He further appealed to donors to oppose efforts to prevent assistance from reaching those for whom it was intended, including the Syrian population in the occupied Golan.

60. OCHA should coordinate with UNRWA in monitoring the humanitarian situation of civilians under foreign occupation, and he hoped that the Secretary-General's report to the Council the following year would include an analysis of the efforts made by the Organization to that end, the situation in the occupied territories and the difficulties encountered in the provision of international humanitarian assistance, together with proposals on ways of resolving those difficulties, so that the General Assembly could adopt appropriate resolutions on the matter.

61. Internally displaced persons were among the civilians protected by the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. Migrants were primarily the responsibility of Governments, and it was incumbent on the international community to help those Governments provide assistance to their citizens. Egypt was willing to make an effort to overcome the differences that had attended the preparation and discussion of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, provided that the problems relating to the status of the Guiding Principles were resolved through consultations with Governments having observations to make on some of them. The Representative of the Secretary-General on displaced persons should then submit a report on those consultations to the Council and to the General Assembly so that the Guiding Principles could be appropriately amended.

62. It was of the greatest importance that the General Assembly should play a leading role in monitoring and evaluating the provision of humanitarian assistance. He called on all organizations concerned to assist States in national capacity-building and to ensure that their own efforts were duly coordinated so that disaster relief could be dealt with through an integrated approach. Lastly, he urged States and international funding institutions to increase their contributions to humanitarian assistance, in accordance with the principle of solidarity and in the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

63. **Mr. Garvelink** (United States of America) said that the response of the United States and the civilized world to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan had demonstrated the value of coordination and the importance of laying the groundwork during the emergency phase of a crisis to ensure a rapid transition to recovery, rehabilitation and long-term sustainable development. An effective humanitarian response required coordination of early-warning mechanisms, the sharing and analysis of information, continuous needs assessments, coordination between the

humanitarian community and the military, as appropriate, and, of course, adequate resources. The relief effort in Afghanistan had been facilitated by the established presence there of many agencies which had already been providing assistance to victims of conflict and drought prior to 11 September 2001, the coordination of the humanitarian response by OCHA, the delivery of food and humanitarian assistance by the World Food Programme (WFP) and NGOs under the most difficult conditions and ongoing assessments of refugees and internally displaced persons by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The United States and many other donors were also fostering self-reliance through the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan people, which linked the emergency phase of the crisis to recovery, rehabilitation and long-term development. The Programme's success, however, was highly dependent on good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights on the part of the Afghan Government. Humanitarian assistance was also needed in other crisis areas, including Somalia, the Sudan, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola.

64. Notwithstanding the severity of the problems in Afghanistan, it should be recalled that, in all those places, it was the primary responsibility of the Government to provide for the people and protect their rights.

65. The United States fully supported the efforts of the United Nations Security Coordinator to improve the safety and security of humanitarian personnel in the field, who were increasingly targeted by militants and armed factions. His delegation looked forward to the guidance manual being developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the terms of engagement with armed groups in conflict situations. The United States strongly supported the Secretary-General's call for a culture of protection and believed that every humanitarian worker was responsible for promoting it. A culture of protection, however, depended partly on a culture of training within the United Nations specialized agencies, since the majority of humanitarian workers lacked adequate training or preparation to fulfil their responsibilities in that regard. Most importantly, a culture of protection must rest upon a culture of accountability, built on enforceable codes of conduct, rigorous oversight and monitoring of assistance programmes and effective mechanisms for reporting abuses of power. Expressing outrage at the sexual exploitation of refugee and displaced children in West Africa, he called for swift implementation of the recommendations made by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee task force on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises.

66. His delegation welcomed and supported the work of the inter-agency Unit on Internal Displacement. Noting that most of those benefiting from humanitarian assistance were women, children, the elderly and the infirm, he expressed support for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's efforts to mainstream gender analysis into every aspect of its work.

67. Donors must do more to support the consolidated appeals process. The United States had provided over 60 per cent of all WFP resources in 2001, 48 per cent of the combined response to all consolidated appeals and 25 per cent of the budget of UNHCR. Meanwhile, the contributions of each of the other major donors to the overall consolidated appeals process had come to less than 11 per cent. It was also important to strengthen coordination in complex emergencies and natural disasters. His delegation welcomed the focus in the Secretary-General's report on humanitarian space and the recommendation that NGOs should be involved in the development of humanitarian strategies. All strategies must be aimed at ensuring self-reliance among the beneficiaries and a smooth transition to recovery, rehabilitation and long-term development.

68. His delegation supported the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group in its effort to promote international standards for the coordination and mobilization of search and rescue teams. It also appreciated and supported the efforts of OCHA to facilitate the exchange of information among multilateral, governmental and non-governmental actors through such tools as ReliefWeb, the Integrated Regional Information Network and humanitarian information centres in the field.

69. **Mr. Khalid** (Pakistan) said that, while the United Nations system had the necessary expertise to cope with humanitarian emergencies, a shortage of resources was the major impediment to disaster-management efforts. Regrettably, the lack of political will on the part of donors had resulted in a 10 per cent loss in the market share of the consolidated appeals process. He also noted that as new emergencies arose, old ones were neglected. He called for a comprehensive

assessment of situations involving internally displaced persons and of the economic, social and environmental burden on countries — such as Afghanistan — that were hosting large numbers of refugees.

70. In order to ensure the repatriation of refugees, humanitarian relief assistance must be coupled with development strategies, beginning with the establishment of peace and security and extending to demining, repair of damaged infrastructure and, above all, the provision of substantial financial and material support, including seeds and agricultural equipment. Existing United Nations institutions and mechanisms, such as the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the consolidated appeals process, could develop strategies for capacity-building in developing countries to meet humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters. Local authorities must in all circumstances facilitate access by United Nations and humanitarian agencies' aid workers to affected populations.

71. Based on its own experience, Pakistan wished to propose that future natural disaster strategies should include contingency planning by United Nations country teams for all possible risks, in consultation with host Governments; the establishment of an emergency reserve fund; and capacity-building in disaster management at the local level. OCHA and other institutions could identify innovative ways to achieve the latter. He stressed the importance of direct participation by local communities and populations in the transition from relief to development and called for the allocation of a higher quantum of development aid to countries hosting vast numbers of refugees. His delegation hoped that the Council's current deliberations would lead to a common strategy for addressing the issue of humanitarian assistance in a holistic manner.

72. **Mr. Palu** (Australia) said that his country had consistently advocated effective, coordinated responses to emergency and relief situations. The Secretary-General's report covered several issues of importance to his Government, including the need for effectively coordinated responses to complex emergencies, improvements in protection for civilians, the need to mainstream gender into the humanitarian response to emergencies and the establishment of the Unit on Internal Displacement.

73. Over three quarters of Australia's bilateral assistance operations were in countries that were vulnerable to, experiencing or recovering from conflict. The Government's new Peace, Conflict and Development Policy would increase the Australian aid programme's focus on preventing conflict and building peace along with its more traditional missions of humanitarian relief and reconstruction. Events of the past few years, including a growing civilian death toll and the frequency and severity of assaults on humanitarian personnel, had demonstrated continuing disregard for international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law. Australia supported the efforts to improve protection for civilians outlined in the Secretary-General's report. His Government was also deeply disturbed by allegations of sexual abuse of children by humanitarian workers, and supported the measures taken by organizations of the United Nations system to develop codes of conduct and staff monitoring and training and to improve gender distribution among staff. However, permanent staff and long-term community service staff, rather than the current emergency teams, were needed to fully address the protection issue.

74. Australia warmly welcomed the emphasis in the report on the capacities of women as agents for change, and the recognition that much more needed to be done to reach women affected by crises and to actively support their capacity to contribute to the response. Women must have equal access to and full participation in power structures and be involved in all efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and promote peace and security. It was essential that gender integration should occur at the earliest stages of all peace-building activities and disaster-preparedness and recovery programmes.

75. He was pleased to see the emphasis placed on transition from relief to long-term development. His delegation supported the involvement of UNDP and other development agencies at the earliest stages of crisis response, including the consolidated appeals process. That mechanism was a useful tool for ongoing strategic planning and monitoring as well as resource mobilization. His delegation had played an active role in the recent review of the process, and was particularly concerned about the review's findings that there was a lack of progress in prioritizing projects to be included in the appeal, that projects were still not properly screened and that agencies were still

struggling to separate wider humanitarian means from narrower institutional ones. It was imperative that the consolidated appeals process should be seen not simply as a fund-raising exercise but as a full strategic planning tool.

76. **Mr. Lehne** (Observer for Norway) said that the Secretary-General's call for the establishment of a culture of protection was highly appropriate. His delegation welcomed the establishment of the Unit on Internal Displacement within OCHA and hoped that its work would be based on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Calling the exceedingly high number of internally displaced persons one of the main humanitarian challenges of the time, he urged Member States to provide the Unit with the necessary financial support. The Unit would also need the continued support of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

77. He stressed the importance of sustained adequate financial commitment from donors and further improvements in coordination by the United Nations. Norway continued to support the consolidated appeals process as a means of improving coordination and avoiding duplication. Despite the progress made in truly consolidating appeals, however, there were still considerable challenges to be met. The steady decline in the proportion of humanitarian assistance channelled through the consolidated appeals process was particularly paradoxical at a time when greater efforts were being made to improve that process. Persistent underfunding could hinder the effectiveness of the process, and donors' continued tendency to favour bilateral assistance over multilateral funding could reduce its coordination possibilities. His delegation was pleased that the United Nations was seeking to remedy the situation and commended the Organization on its commitment to strengthening the resident/humanitarian coordinator system. The United Nations should work even more closely with NGOs and other non-United Nations organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross. His delegation hoped to see a stronger relationship between NGO activities and the consolidated appeals process. It welcomed the Secretary-General's emphasis on enhancing local capabilities and shared his view that international efforts must complement those of local actors.

78. Greater attention should be focused on consolidated appeals projects during the difficult period between the provision of humanitarian assistance and the arrival of long-term aid. In response to the Secretary-General's call for more timely participation of development actors and improved donor funding throughout the transition period, Norway had established a specific budgetary allocation for consolidated appeals projects, mainly for countries emerging from conflict situations. Such transitional assistance could be included in the Common Humanitarian Action Plan. The Immediate and Transitional Appeal Programme for Afghanistan, a coordinated response by development and humanitarian agencies, was an interesting new approach which might be replicated.

79. National Governments bore the primary responsibility for protecting internally displaced persons; however, if they were unable to do so, they must ensure access by humanitarian workers, guarantee those workers' safety and take into account the relevant financial implications. In conclusion, he emphasized the paramount importance of political action in making humanitarian assistance available and in preventing the situations that necessitated it.

80. **Mr. Rosenthal** (Guatemala) expressed agreement with most of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General. As a nation which was extremely vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly earthquakes and hurricanes, and had large numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees, Guatemala supported the views expressed by the observer for Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. His delegation believed that the United Nations already had the tools to respond to humanitarian emergencies but must determine how best to use them.

81. Although States bore the primary responsibility for assisting victims of natural disasters and other emergencies, in certain situations the international community had a duty to intervene. In that connection, his delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that the protection of civilians must be based on respect for the provisions of international humanitarian law, human rights and the rights of refugees. Noting that the greatest challenge lay in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable groups, he expressed support for the establishment of the Unit on Internal Displacement within OCHA. His delegation also agreed with the Secretary-General on adopting a regional and subregional focus which could become international: for example, the provision of humanitarian assistance to disaster victims in Central America. Stressing the

importance of the relief-to-development transition, including capacity-building in respect of local authorities, he welcomed the Secretary-General's idea of combining relief and development assistance in a single track through the consolidated appeals process. He also noted with concern the decline in the proportion of humanitarian assistance channelled through that mechanism.

82. Coherence among the various actors in humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters could be enhanced through a partnership between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and also through greater coherence among the various agencies of the United Nations system and between those agencies and other entities which provided humanitarian assistance. The Council must do its utmost to ensure the rational distribution of tasks among the partners; its deliberations should culminate in a specific resolution to that end.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations E/2002/SR.24

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

14 October 2002

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Substantive session for 2002
Humanitarian segment

Provisional summary record of the 24th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 15 July 2002, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Buallay (Vice-President) ..... (Bahrain)

Contents

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

02-48016 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Šimonović (Croatia), Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/57/77-E/2002/63 and A/57/79-E/2002/76)

1. **Mr. Lubbers** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that an increasing trend in peace-building operations was for political, military, humanitarian and development actors to assume a comprehensive and integrated approach to crisis situations. The Office of UNHCR had extensive field presence in volatile regions and often worked in partnership with the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on conflict prevention, conflict resolution, refugee security and efforts to ensure sustainable peace. For the return of refugees to countries of origin to be sustainable, sound post-conflict policies were essential. Increasingly, UNHCR worked also in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). In addition, there was a need for strengthened cooperation with the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) to address staff security issues. The joint effort to ensure that the Office received funding from the regular budget must be continued.

2. Recent experience in Afghanistan had further highlighted the need to devise a more effective and innovative approach to the transition from emergency relief to longer-term development, which would incorporate humanitarian as well as development aspects. He wished to propose a variation on the demilitarization, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) approach, namely repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

3. The concept of development through local integration would apply to cases where local integration of refugees in countries of first asylum was a viable option. Host Governments and the international community should perceive refugees as agents of development rather than as a burden. Since the World Bank, UNDP or UNHCR would be unable to deliver the necessary results singly, joint ventures should be organized on a country-by-country basis. UNHCR had accordingly identified eight possible flagship programmes.

4. The United Nations system in recent years had sought to strengthen its response to internal displacement through an inter-agency, collaborative approach. His own Office's policy on involvement with internally displaced persons had been communicated to its partners and endorsed by the General Assembly. By responding more predictably to concrete situations, UNHCR could help to ensure a better overall response from the United Nations. He proposed to keep the Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator informed of situations where UNHCR already played a substantial role in supporting internally displaced persons and where it would continue to be needed in future.

5. Given the importance of strong leadership on the ground, the humanitarian coordinator system required strengthening. In situations involving large humanitarian operations, a representative of a United Nations agency with a significant presence in the country should be available to act as humanitarian coordinator. UNHCR, for its part, would indicate its own availability in a timely manner.

6. He supported ongoing efforts to strengthen the consolidated appeals process, but had two concerns. Firstly, UNHCR should not be perceived as a purely humanitarian agency, since its work was not limited to short-term emergency relief programmes. Moreover, the process should contain adequate plans to unite relief and transitional programmes, including in the area of resource mobilization. Secondly, donors must step up their financial support and be more heavily involved in needs assessment and follow-up. Good planning meant little if the plans could not be implemented.

7. Lastly, he wished to stress the importance of regional approaches to humanitarian crises and complex cross-border population movements. Regional organizations and initiatives such as the new African Union and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) played a vital role in that regard.

8. **Mr. Valdes** (Chile), supporting all the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report on strengthening the coordination of emergency assistance (A/57/77-E/2002/63), said that his delegation shared the concern that donor contributions made through the consolidated appeals process tended

to be limited to food aid and that they had declined even as humanitarian crises had grown in scope and seriousness. More and more, donors preferred to channel aid bilaterally to high-profile crises in which security was a problem, making it difficult for the United Nations to form a comprehensive picture of humanitarian needs and aid flows. Equally troubling was the tendency to distinguish between relief assistance and development funding and to callously neglect the latter at a later stage when the prostrate populations most needed help. That had fortunately not been the case in Afghanistan, and the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People could well serve as the model for current and future humanitarian action.

9. Humanitarian crises and the sufferings of the people involved did not obey political considerations, and the satisfaction of humanitarian needs had to be disengaged from the political situations that had provoked the crises in areas such as Liberia, Guinea or the Middle East.

10. Natural disasters and environmental emergencies would continue to create critical economic difficulties for many of the less developed countries. The alarming spread of HIV/AIDS in many parts of the world had to be stopped. The marked rise of internal conflicts had also produced humanitarian disasters such as internal displacement and harm to civilians. Tragically, women and children were increasingly becoming military objectives in places like Palestine, Israel, the Sudan and Angola. International mine-clearing efforts were also a necessity.

11. The Secretary-General was right to call for the creation of a culture of protection of civilian populations, for which the international community was always responsible, and a universal consensus would have to be reached on the underlying principles. The Council for its part must work to strengthen the institutional capacity of the United Nations to deal with a growing number of humanitarian crises.

12. **Mr. Al-Sulaiti** (Qatar) said that natural disasters such as drought, desertification, earthquakes and the El Niño phenomenon had affected many populated regions, having an impact on both people and the infrastructure. In addition, many regions of the world were beset by civil strife and regional wars that caused particular suffering to marginal population groups and to the most vulnerable sectors of society such as women, children, the disabled, the elderly, widows and orphans. His delegation agreed with the statement in the Secretary-General's report to the effect that terrorism had recently assumed an alarming regional and worldwide dimension. The process of social development had therefore taken on a human dimension, the provision of relief assistance would have no lasting impact unless it included a social component and met the needs of people for capacity-building and institution-building, thereby ensuring the effective participation of people in policy-making and the distribution of resources.

13. The alleviation of the burden of natural disasters, and preparations to deal with them should be a worldwide objective. The destructiveness of natural disasters could to a considerable extent be alleviated, even in cases where the disasters themselves were on a scale that could not be managed and where they could not be predicted. Disasters, whether natural or man-made, such as regional wars or terrorism mainly affected the poor, the most vulnerable and the marginalized. There was therefore a connection between the occurrence of disasters and the increase in abject poverty. It was difficult to speak of disasters in isolation from the political context. Social development was, first and foremost, a political process.

14. It was now understood that a decisive factor in development was mankind and that true development was based on human development. That concept had become widely accepted after its adoption by the UNDP and, in turn, by the developing countries and their regional organizations.

15. Recognition that man was central to development, had encouraged sound views of development, including a focus on social organization and the ability of social institutions to maximize the benefits of social action and ensure that those benefits were distributed fairly. Experience of development in the countries of the third world, in particular, had shown that concentration on certain aspects, sectors or groups to the neglect of others was likely to lead to distorted development that did not meet the material and spiritual needs of the population.

16. Although present-day societies had certain features in common, they were highly diverse in terms of their economy and natural resources, their forms of social and economic organization, and their lifestyles, and standard of living. A positive view should be taken

of social diversity, especially in its cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious dimensions, so as to respond to the interests of the diverse groups within the framework of the basic values shared by the society. Social integration had to be based on the best interests of everyone, but particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. Poverty and unemployment were major obstacles to social integration. It was therefore necessary to adopt an overall view of the issues addressed at the Millennium Summit and, before that, at the World Summit for Social Development.

17. In addressing the problems of poverty and unemployment, society had to pay particular attention to deprived and marginalized groups. Failure to do so would be likely to lead to social division, a withdrawal of certain groups from society and to hostility and violence. That was the responsibility both of the State and of the international community, which must fulfil its responsibility to give particular assistance to the least developed countries and thereby make a reality of the right to development. The developed countries should also make a serious effort to increase their official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of gross national product.

18. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China) said that humanitarian assistance had become even more important in view of the frequent occurrence of natural disasters and armed conflict, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the growing problem of refugees and internally displaced persons. Natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies were increasingly regional in nature, hence the importance of enhancing regional response mechanisms and building national capacity. Humanitarian assistance — aimed primarily at protecting vulnerable groups and enhancing their ability to withstand crises — should be provided in strict accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991. In particular, humanitarian assistance activities should conform to the wishes of the requesting countries and should be provided without conditionality.

19. While the consolidated appeals process had played an important role in raising funds for humanitarian assistance, it was a matter of concern that the proportion of such funding had fallen from an average of 40 per cent to 30 per cent over the past decade.

20. The response of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to the floods in China had been much appreciated.

21. **Mr. Caldas de Moura** (Brazil) said that his delegation attached great importance to the collaboration of various United Nations bodies, leading to synergy in the provision of humanitarian assistance. The steady decline in the proportion of humanitarian assistance channelled through the consolidated appeals process was a matter of particular concern, since it had led to a weakening of coordination and lack of adequate support for "forgotten emergencies". Money was poured into visible emergencies that mobilized public opinion in developed countries, but resources were less forthcoming when it came to laying the foundations for future recovery and development. To ensure that root causes were dealt with, donor countries must consider how to bridge the artificial separation between relief, rehabilitation and development that currently hampered transition activities.

22. International assistance could make a real difference by reducing the need for post-disaster aid, reconstruction and peace-building. A true culture of protection depended on safe and unhindered access for humanitarian personnel to those in need and a resolution of the problem of internally displaced persons. States must comply with their international obligations in that regard. It was also vital to strengthen the advocacy efforts of the United Nations system and to halt abuses and ensure that the perpetrators were held accountable.

23. Since humanitarian workers and civilians were increasingly the targets of deliberate or random violence in armed conflicts, their safety and security must continue to be accorded high priority. The protection of internally displaced persons must be strengthened including by promoting use of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The Council, for its part, should adopt a victim-centred approach to humanitarian emergencies, keeping in mind that aid recipients also had rights.

24. **Mr. Frisch** (Observer for Switzerland) said that OCHA should strengthen its efforts to raise awareness of humanitarian situations both within the Organization and among Member States. His delegation attached particular attention to efforts to coordinate humanitarian assistance and to improve its effectiveness.

25. The consolidated appeals process should be used to improve prioritization of humanitarian need and to promote increased dialogue among donors. It was also vital to plan humanitarian operations in close consultation with host Governments. In view of the need to ensure the transition between relief and development, closer linkages should be created between the consolidated appeals process, strategic intervention frameworks and national poverty reduction strategy papers.

26. While paying tribute to humanitarian personnel working in precarious situations, his delegation also wished to stress the need for them to adhere to relevant codes of behaviour.

27. Conflict situations were often exacerbated by the displacement of populations, which also had a destabilizing impact on host populations. He emphasized the importance of applying the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in such situations. Switzerland was involved in efforts to promote respect for international humanitarian law in conflicts, including by non-State actors. Such respect was essential to establishing a "culture of protection", responding to the specific needs of vulnerable groups, ensuring the security of humanitarian personnel and prohibiting unlawful exploitation of natural resources.

28. **Mr. Zaman** (Observer for Bangladesh) noted that over the years, the extent and type of humanitarian assistance had adapted to crises that had led to an increased need for national and global coordination. In addition, a smooth transition from ad hoc relief efforts — to which the United Nations machinery was primarily geared — to long-term planning for reconstruction and sustainable development. Moreover, the decline in funding must be reversed. The consolidated appeals process, while a useful fund-raising tool, would not of itself compensate for the 62-per-cent shortfall in disaster-prone areas such as West Africa, the Great Lakes region, Angola or Palestine.

29. The groups most vulnerable in humanitarian crises — women, children, the internally displaced — had to be protected and assisted. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee had issued a welcome policy statement on the mainstreaming and integration of gender perspectives into the humanitarian response to emergencies. The United Nations system and the World Bank must support targeted interventions providing relief to women and the other vulnerable groups, and the services of non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector must be enlisted, especially in connection with poverty-alleviation schemes. Innocent civilians were often the major victims of armed conflicts, and the steps taken to promote greater coordination between OCHA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should provide more protection for them.

30. In the case of natural disasters, regional and national centres for early forecasting, equipped with advanced technologies, had to be introduced and developed. Monitoring of the situation on the ground, through United Nations field trips and closer consultation with Governments in the assessment of needs, was also of paramount importance.

31. **Ms. Larusdottir** (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that for too many, it had become a daily challenge to remain alive despite drought, floods, and war. Food alone would not ensure survival in such situations, for the vulnerability and risk factors were more complex. People died of preventable causes like measles, malaria, diarrhoea, tuberculosis or childbirth complications. Complex emergencies were responsible for 65 per cent of all epidemics and engendered the highest risk for HIV/AIDS, preventable child and maternal mortality, disability and disease.

32. Emergencies made it imperative to take exceptional public health action to ensure continued delivery of services and protection of the population. Indeed, emergency and humanitarian actions were an essential part of WHO global activity. Yet health remained underfunded and, in fact, was often the lowest priority of the United Nations consolidated appeals mechanism. Critical public health measures were essential to save lives, and human survival was the ultimate measure of the success or failure of humanitarian operations. WHO identified the life-saving practices, adjusted them to the epidemiological and operational context, and ensured that they were applied in a coordinated manner by all humanitarian partners.

33. **Mr. Graisse** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that in responding to crises effective coordination between the various humanitarian organizations was both an operational necessity and a moral imperative. WFP mobilized food aid in emergencies and protracted crises, and in 2001 it had assisted 77 million people in 82 countries at a cost of almost $2 billion. Its

experience on the front line of humanitarian action, in often extremely complex and rapidly unfolding situations as in Afghanistan or more recently in southern Africa, had made brought home to it the benefits of enhanced coordination. Under the guidance of the OCHA, the United Nations system had in the past decade made much progress on that score.

34. WFP had worked hard to integrate the consolidated appeals process into its normal work. Coordination mechanisms should, of course, be continually reviewed and improved. Currently, it might be advisable to encourage the involvement of a wider range of humanitarian stakeholders or to analyse the impact of underfunding. Improved coordination among donor countries to ensure rational allocation of resources among equally vulnerable populations was essential.

35. WFP was supporting innovations such as the United Nations joint logistics centres recently established in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique, which sought to coordinate the management of the logistical assets and transport infrastructure of all humanitarian agencies in order to speed up response times and lower costs. WFP had also been particularly active at the inter-agency level in strengthening emergency-preparedness. Together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), it had directed the preparation of a set of guidelines for inter-agency contingency planning and promoted system-wide contingency planning. A WFP unit, using information technologies, conducted food security analyses and mapped critical pockets of hunger and vulnerability and, in conjunction with the early-warning systems of other agencies and organizations, the unit provided valuable early information on potential crises to the entire humanitarian community.

36. Enhanced preparedness measures, however, were meaningless without the accompanying resources for action. Often donor funds arrived too late to avert crises or were earmarked for much-publicized emergencies. Support had to be timely, balanced and sustained. Besides being far more economical, early action was a moral imperative.

37. **Mr. Ouedraogo** (Burkina Faso) said that natural disasters were affecting increasing numbers of people, while continuing armed conflicts in many countries were displacing whole civilian populations, which were made more vulnerable by the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS. The result was an unprecedented number of emergency humanitarian situations that were straining the economic capabilities of States. In poor countries, national development and living conditions were being compromised. Drought and war also often spilled over national borders, bringing with them flows of hungry refugees.

38. International solidarity demanded that funds should be found to assist and protect the victims, especially in target groups such as displaced persons, women, children, the elderly and the disabled. The United Nations system must increase its presence in the many parts of the world that were prey to humanitarian crises. It must help the Governments concerned to develop effective national institutional capabilities and also encourage the involvement of local communities.

39. In Burkina Faso, the Government had established a network of national, regional and local centres for emergency assistance and rehabilitation throughout the country. Several years of failing crops had made emergency food aid necessary, in cooperation with the Government's development partners. In addition, a number of non-governmental organizations were providing targeted assistance to the handicapped, refugees and returnees. Burkina Faso had emphasized disaster prevention through early-warning and preparedness programmes. The rehabilitation sector, however, despite its importance, rarely attracted donor support.

40. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's recommendations and called for a genuinely humanitarian consolidated appeals process, free of political or strategic considerations.

41. **Mr. MacDonnell** (Observer for Canada) said that his delegation supported in general the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2002/63) regarding humanitarian assistance. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 had galvanized the international community into acting to remedy the humanitarian and political crisis in Afghanistan. That momentum must be maintained, and at the same time problems such as protection for civilians, humanitarian access and definition of the roles and relations between military and humanitarian actors must be addressed.

42. Complex emergencies and natural disasters everywhere presented similar challenges and affected

millions of people. Access to those in need was one of the most frustrating challenges and it was unacceptable that humanitarian actors should be prevented from reaching the vulnerable, often as a result of the policies and actions of the local authorities. He stressed that sovereignty implied responsibility for civilian populations and that international law provided for access for humanitarian assistance and the safe and unhindered movement of humanitarian personnel. Where Governments did not have the means to meet their responsibilities, they should seek the support of the international community, which could play a valuable role in helping to organize humanitarian aid, and which, moreover, had a responsibility to take action against impunity for attacks on civilians and humanitarian workers.

43. Action in support of war-affected and other vulnerable populations had made important progress in the past three years. The issue of humanitarian access was a key element of such efforts and was buttressed by the Secretary-General's call for a culture of protection. His Government had made the protection of civilians a foreign policy priority and he urged other States to do likewise. Recent events in West Africa had demonstrated that there were varying degrees of vulnerability and capacities to act, and that extra effort must be made to provide all populations with appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance. The recent actions taken in that regard by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee were welcome but must be integrated into operations worldwide.

44. It had in the past proved difficult to ensure effective transition from relief to reconciliation and development, in part due to a lack of political will on the part of States. Much work remained to be done to create flexible funding and institutional mechanisms to support transition periods and address root causes. That had become clear in certain consolidated appeals processes, where country teams had included transition activities only to find them undersubscribed. His Government had attempted to address such concerns through its Peace-Building Fund, Landmines Initiative and Human Security Programme and was exploring other ways to respond to the needs of countries in transition, with a view to improving links between humanitarian aid and development programmes. At the international level, some frank discussion in the governing bodies was required, and donors must deliver consistent messages to the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and other development financing organizations. In any event, donors should not exert pressure on humanitarian actors to become engaged in transition activities in the absence of development actors and should help to clarify roles and responsibilities at the field level.

45. Agency partners must be required to add value to their efforts by entering into memoranda of understanding and other inter-agency cooperative arrangements to ensure tasks were distributed appropriately, with built-in exit strategies. Existing planning instruments such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the consolidated appeals processes and the World Bank's common development frameworks could be used to provide greater coherence. At times it might also be worthwhile to look at programming from a regional or subregional perspective. Resident and humanitarian coordinators and special representatives of the Secretary-General were well placed to foster such collaboration and the Department of Political Affairs and OCHA should likewise strengthen linkages and cooperation. New tools, such as common frameworks and programming, could also be explored.

46. Transitions which led to sustainable peace and development relied heavily on grass-roots involvement, and resident coordinators and relevant agencies and regional organizations should identify, make use of and enhance local capacities throughout the crisis and subsequently. It was also important to ensure the active participation of women. Transition between relief and development was not a linear, orderly process, and it was therefore critical to ensure proper timing of interventions and adopt a flexible and holistic approach. In conflict settings, opportunities to promote reconciliation and conflict prevention should be seized whenever possible, even in the midst of an ongoing crisis. An effective transition also required a secure environment, as had been proved in Sierra Leone, East Timor and Afghanistan, and security and security sector reform must likewise be addressed as an integral part of the reconstruction process.

47. **Mr. Balarezo** (Peru) said the fact that preventive action was less costly than humanitarian action in the case of natural disasters was a further incentive to develop adequate early warning systems and disaster prevention and preparedness. The Council and the General Assembly should make preventive efforts a priority by addressing the root causes of conflicts, which were almost always associated with extreme

poverty, social exclusion and weak democracy, and by helping to create the conditions necessary to ensure reconstruction and development as was being done in Afghanistan. In order to support such efforts, the United Nations should have only one coordinating body responsible for its relations with affected communities and populations.

48. The protection of civilian populations, displaced persons and refugees must be of central concern in the context of the proposed culture of protection, which would require respect for human rights, in particular on the part of Governments and the parties involved in conflict situations. It was also important to ensure protection for humanitarian personnel by developing codes of conduct and standards.

49. In closing, he expressed support for the efforts of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and the measures intended to facilitate its activities in the field.

50. **Mr. Son** Se-joo (Republic of Korea) said that, since the increasing frequency of natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies coupled with the decreasing capacity of developing countries to absorb the economic shock of such events was a trend which was likely to continue, it was important to bolster resources and enhance coordination. Furthermore, since natural disasters and conflicts increasingly affected more than one State, a regional approach to humanitarian aid was often necessary. He therefore welcomed the initiative to strengthen regional infrastructures and enhance cooperation between national emergency-preparedness activities and supported efforts by OCHA to strengthen its regional presence and develop local capacities. Improved contingency planning and preparedness among the members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the United Nations country teams would likewise contribute to more effective utilization of limited resources. In that context, establishment of the United Nations Joint Logistics Centre and the humanitarian information centres was welcome.

51. There was growing concern at the increasing number of civilians being targeted in conflict situations and support for the Secretary-General's call to promote a culture of protection. All groups in conflict situations should respect the provisions of international humanitarian and human rights instruments and ensure safe and sustained access by humanitarian workers to civilian populations. The primary responsibility for ensuring access lay with the State concerned.

52. A smooth transition from emergency relief to humanitarian development was crucial for the creation of a framework capable of sustaining a nation, and he therefore welcomed efforts to increase the participation of the local community as primary actors in that transition. Support for the vulnerable, such as internally displaced persons, women, children, the elderly and the disabled, was likewise essential. The private sector was a virtually untapped resource, which, through investment and job creation, could help sustain a nation through the transition period.

53. He recognized the usefulness of the consolidated appeals process, but stressed the need for a global system to track humanitarian funding. Continued capacity-building and increased coordination would help to decrease the impact of humanitarian crises significantly, a goal to which his delegation remained committed.

54. **Mr. Blanco Domínguez** (Observer for the Dominican Republic), having associated himself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Dominican Republic was especially vulnerable to the cyclical natural phenomena which periodically wreaked havoc in the Caribbean region. Despite his Government's efforts to establish policies for disaster prevention and mitigation, as a result of social and economic pressures many people were forced to live in geographically vulnerable areas and inadequate housing. That situation, which was not exclusive to his country, explained why natural disasters caused increasing loss of life, and it had economic, social and environmental consequences which delayed development and undermined progress.

55. It was essential that the fruits of technical and scientific knowledge, including remote sensing data, should be made available to the developing countries and national and international humanitarian organizations to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters. It was also essential that the bureaucratic obstacles which in too many cases delayed the provision of humanitarian assistance should be eliminated. In that context, he drew attention to paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution 56/195, which requested the Secretary-General to optimize and disseminate through all available channels information

necessary for the effective management of international cooperation in the field of disaster reduction.

56. Natural disasters were a complex phenomenon which recognized no boundaries, but adequate preparation, warning and mitigation strategies could make all the difference. Regional and international cooperation commitments including by financing organizations, national Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society, were the key to an effective international response. Accordingly, he called on the international community, in particular the donor countries to provide through established channels the necessary additional untied funding which would make possible the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and the promotion of development in general.

57. **Ms. Singh** (India), having associated herself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that her Government, despite resource constraints and in a true spirit of South-South cooperation, continued to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need.

58. She expressed support for the promotion of a culture of protection, which should be defined in a broad and realistic manner. A durable and just peace provided the foundation for protection but its establishment could be impeded by poverty. International cooperation for development would help to ensure social progress, raise living standards and create a culture of protection.

59. Democracy, the rule of law, good governance, human rights, economic growth and development were mutually reinforcing and constituted necessary elements for the creation of a culture of protection. The roots of human rights violations varied and were not always amenable to legislative and enforcement approaches. For example, situations involving extreme ideologies required a more multifaceted approach, whereas human rights problems which were in fact symptoms of underdevelopment could only be addressed by sustained economic growth and development.

60. She welcomed the independent review of the consolidated appeals process and noted that the process had been strengthened over the years and that its technical standards and level of engagement with United Nations agencies had been reinforced. Unfortunately, despite increased needs, the proportion of humanitarian assistance channelled through the consolidated appeals process was shrinking. Without a significant increase in humanitarian funding, the transition from relief to development could drain resources from traditional budgets. She supported the position of the Secretary-General that transitional activities should be financed through the consolidated appeals process.

61. With regard to the illicit trade in natural resources and its effect on humanitarian assistance, she maintained that a mandatory system for marking and tracing small arms and light weapons would save more innocent lives than elaborate controls on trade in minerals and natural resources. Most conflicts were fought with small arms and light weapons, which were so lethal and easy to obtain that they had made terrorists and warlords increasingly powerful.

62. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were not legal principles negotiated in an intergovernmental process; they had simply been drafted by a team of technical experts and non-governmental organizations. On the other hand, the guiding principles on humanitarian assistance outlined in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 were valid and proven principles, and their continued application would contribute greatly to relieving pain and suffering.

63. **Mr. Lamba** (Observer for Malawi) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The report on the strengthening of coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance provided a good basis for a meaningful exchange of views.

64. Malawi and the southern Africa region were facing a serious food shortage, and therefore, his delegation hoped that the related resolution would be focused, forward-looking and address the challenges that the countries of the region were encountering as they responded to that crisis. His Government had declared a national disaster because of the food crisis, against the backdrop of one of the world's highest rates of HIV/AIDS infection. As an interim measure, the Government had imported maize, but delivery had been slow.

65. For the Government of Malawi, the guiding principles contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182 were the basis for action in such crises. However, the question of capacity must be addressed

urgently if the transition from relief to development was to be realized, and technical as well as financial support was needed. Humanitarian workers were faced with serious logistical challenges in delivering food quickly to places with little or no infrastructure. Reaching the most vulnerable groups — the elderly, women, children and the disabled — required specific strategies.

66. His delegation would like to see continued improvement of the consolidated appeals process, with more involvement by non-governmental organizations. Innovative strategies were needed to reverse the decline in humanitarian assistance channelled through that process. His delegation also commended efforts to develop an international disaster response law. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had made commendable efforts in mobilizing resources, and should have an increased presence at the regional level.

67. **Mr. Acemah** (Uganda) said that the distribution of risk and vulnerability was uneven throughout the world, and Africa often bore the brunt of disasters. Decentralization of disaster response would help to strengthen the capacity of local populations to respond to emergencies, one of the major goals of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. The Government of Uganda had implemented a decentralization programme, whereby local councils had been given power to organize their communities. The Vulnerability and Analysis Mapping Unit of the World Food Programme had completed a pilot emergency vulnerability analysis, proof that community-based local disaster management was crucial.

68. Information regarding impending disasters should be accessible to all stakeholders. It had become clear that information management was critical in disasters, as institutional memory and access mechanisms could be destroyed, and Governments and the United Nations must build effective systems to store information for future use.

69. The number of vulnerable societies was increasing as human activity interfered with the balance of nature. It was unlikely that the Millennium development goals could be achieved within the desired time frame unless disaster reduction was factored into the process. Most developing countries had limited budget capacity to set up disaster management mechanisms, and thus, they relied increasingly on the United Nations and the donor community to provide critical input. The consolidated appeals process, therefore, should be strengthened and funded adequately to enable humanitarian assistance to be channelled through it. Bilateral assistance, though welcome, should be aimed mainly at the most vulnerable.

70. **Mr. Coşkun** (Observer for Turkey) said that natural disasters and complex emergencies continued to affect millions of people worldwide, and the conditions under which humanitarian assistance was often delivered had deteriorated. The members of the international community must join forces to tackle those challenges. Natural disasters and the tragic events of 11 September, which disregarded national borders, made it clear that, in an interconnected world, there was no alternative to that approach.

71. The international community had had at its disposal for over 10 years the mechanism established in General Assembly resolution 46/182, which gave the United Nations a central role in coordinating international humanitarian assistance. Its guiding principles had helped to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian response, yet given the increasingly complex operating environment, there was room for improvement.

72. Because of its location in a region prone to earthquakes and other natural disasters, Turkey had suffered immense human and material loss, but there had been positive outcomes as well. Recognizing their shared vulnerability and the virtue in pooling their efforts, Turkey and Greece had established the Joint Hellenic-Turkish Standby Disaster Response Unit, which was intended to provide timely and effective humanitarian assistance and reinforce United Nations standby capacity. Among the lessons learned from the 1999 earthquakes in the region was the importance of strengthening international urban search and rescue assistance, and Turkey would submit a draft resolution on that subject at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

73. Afghanistan had presented itself as a testing ground for the ability of the international community to make a difference for those in need. It was a prime example of a combined natural disaster and complex emergency. The rapid mobilization of international support had been phenomenal, but the resolve and

commitment must be maintained. The major focus in such cases should be on the transition from relief to development, which required effective and sustainable funding mechanisms.

74. The report of the Secretary-General made a valuable contribution to the goal of promoting a "culture of protection", and an indispensable part of that culture was the safety and security of humanitarian staff, which continued to be a cause for concern. Modernization and development had yielded benefits to the international community, but challenges and risks had simply become more complex. It could not be assumed that humanitarian needs would decline in coming years, and therefore, the international community must come up with coherent and comprehensive strategies in dealing with natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies. Effective international cooperation was the most valuable tool in that regard.

75. **Mr. Cappagli** (Argentina) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The United Nations system should continue to take a flexible approach in devising mechanisms to address the changing nature of humanitarian crises. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the establishment of the inter-agency Unit on Internal Displacement. Bearing in mind the humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions of many armed conflicts, steps should be taken to enhance cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, within their respective mandates.

76. The needs of human beings, in particular the most vulnerable groups, should be at the centre of humanitarian action. His delegation supported the development of a culture of protection, integrating such aspects as access, justice and reconciliation, the needs of refugees and the internally displaced, safety of United Nations personnel, illicit exploitation of natural resources, small arms trafficking, landmines and the humanitarian impact of sanctions into the discussion. At the same time, the challenge posed by the criminalization of the economy in countries affected by armed conflict should be considered from the perspective of the transition from relief to development.

77. In order to mobilize additional resources to provide assistance and protection to people in need, the consolidated appeals process must be strengthened and used as a tool for coordination and strategic planning. The systematic participation of non-governmental organizations in humanitarian strategy should be encouraged. The active participation of civil society was essential to the success of humanitarian relief missions as well.

78. Although it was a well-established principle that the primary responsibility for assistance to populations affected by humanitarian crises lay with Governments, in circumstances where States were unwilling or unable to meet their responsibilities the international community should step into the breach.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations E/2002/SR.25

Economic and Social Council

Provisional
14 October 2002

Original: English

Substantive session of 2002
Humanitarian affairs segment

Provisional summary record of the 25th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 16 July 2002, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Buallay (Vice-President) ..... (Bahrain)

Contents

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

02-48434 (E)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/57/77-E/2002/63 and A/57/79-E/2002/76)

Panel discussion on reaching the vulnerable in the context of complex humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters

1. **Ms. Bellamy** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), Panellist, said that the panel discussion offered an opportunity to focus on children and families caught up in armed conflict and natural disasters and what they underwent. The reality faced by such vulnerable individuals was one of fleeing home and community, losing access to basic social care, living in a camp for refugees or displaced persons, living without adequate food, safe water or sanitation, and fearing abduction as a child soldier or sexual slave. Armed conflict had a disproportionate effect on women and children, who made up 80 per cent of refugees and internally displaced persons.

2. Vulnerability was worsened by exclusion from decision-making. Among those in that situation were the poor and the geographically or socially isolated, such as ethnic minorities, the internally displaced, nomadic groups and people living with HIV/AIDS, which spread more rapidly in countries in conflict or in humanitarian crisis. Vulnerability also increased as a result of natural disasters, which affected those already afflicted by poverty and disease most severely.

3. In such situations, the humanitarian response needed to be rapid enough to meet immediate needs but also measured enough to reduce vulnerability in the future by building on the capacities of the recipients of assistance. Vulnerability did not equal helplessness: individuals had developed their own ways of coping with the trauma and risks of war and disaster and were potentially strong contributors to their own development. They needed the support of the international community to exploit those abilities and the opportunity to be involved in planning, carrying out and monitoring humanitarian activities. That was particularly true of women and children, whose abilities and contributions were often overlooked.

4. Helping the most vulnerable was conditional on access. Most of those who died in armed conflict, particularly child victims, died not as a result of violence but as a result of poor access to basic health care, food, water and sanitation. For that reason, to continue to save lives, the United Nations system and its partners needed substantial political will to respect the ideal of safe and unobstructed access in all humanitarian crises. Access was particularly important in the case of children to ensure that they were receiving food, water, health care and schooling. Education was the best way to gain access to children and allowed the issue of their protection from exploitation to be addressed as well.

5. Access to the most vulnerable had often proved to be a costly exercise: humanitarian workers' safety and security was frequently threatened. Host governments, warring parties and the international community needed to uphold their responsibility to respect and protect such workers.

6. Fulfilling the aims of the Millennium Summit and the outcome document of the General Assembly special session on children required action on three fronts: first, finding enough resources to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable on a sustained basis; second, obtaining safe and secure access to vulnerable individuals; third, providing protection to vulnerable individuals. As the delegates attending the special session on children had reminded the international community, making the world fit for children would make the world fit for everyone.

7. **Mr. Graisse** (Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP)), Panellist, said that WFP carried out regular vulnerability analyses often in partnership with other organizations, to gauge food needs, coping capacities and households' livelihood strategies. To ensure that food reached the most vulnerable, it sought to channel 80 per cent of food aid through women, involve women in decision-making, and give women more equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade. It worked with other United Nations entities to obtain access to vulnerable people and for purposes of needs assessment and the delivery, distribution and monitoring of food aid. It was essential to establish supply lines which could reach inhospitable areas; doing so had enabled winter famine to be averted in Afghanistan.

8. In southern Africa, where erratic rainfall, severe dry spells, an economic downturn, disrupted commercial farming and poor government decision-making had contributed to the crisis developing in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho and Swaziland, WFP was focusing food distribution on districts that were most vulnerable and had a limited presence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The most vulnerable individuals, including children, the elderly, expectant and nursing women and orphans would be helped through school feeding, supplementary feeding and therapeutic feeding activities. Areas affected by HIV/AIDS deserved special attention, as in Africa the role of good nutrition in slowing the development of HIV into AIDS was crucial. People living with HIV required more energy and protein, so rations were tailored to their needs.

9. In southern Africa, 10.2 million people would be receiving assistance through a WFP regional emergency operation to last until the next harvest. The large number of beneficiaries and the wide area over which they were spread presented a challenge. WFP would need to expand existing collaboration arrangements with NGOs and forge new NGO partnerships where necessary. The situation was complicated by the fact that many such organizations had geared their operations to supplying development assistance, and were not functioning in "emergency" mode. Another challenge was the logistical aspect of the operations. Firstly, close monitoring of the WFP aid pipeline would be required, to ensure that assistance reached the most needy. Secondly, it would be necessary to monitor the secondary NGO food-aid pipelines to ensure that advantage was taken of economies of scale and coordination in the use of port and inland transport infrastructure and local and regional procurement. The cooperation of host governments, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) would be vital in eliminating potential bottlenecks such as road tolls and customs charges. WFP enforced zero tolerance of the use of food aid as a political bargaining chip or as a weapon.

10. An early response was essential in order to prevent suffering in southern Africa, where famine had been averted in 1992. It was to be hoped that that success could be duplicated. It was also important not to neglect the many vulnerable people in other countries, including Afghanistan, Liberia, Angola and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The challenges of reaching such people in areas affected by complex emergencies and natural disasters were the same, and access depended on having the necessary resources and political will.

11. **Mr. Forster** (Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)), Panellist, said that in 2001 ICRC had maintained a permanent presence in 69 countries and had conducted operations in 80 countries. Local presence, which was vital to gaining an understanding of the local situation, depended heavily on Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers, especially in countries affected by conflict.

12. A central component of the ICRC mission was protection activities, which besides assistance to the civilian population, included visits to detainees and helping to reunite families. Its capacity to act depended on recognition of its role as a neutral and independent intermediary. To maintain that status, it was conscious of the need to avoid polemical discussion of the intentions of parties, legitimacy of response and attributing moral responsibility. While it sought to remain independent from other humanitarian bodies, it was conscious of the need to cooperate with other agencies so as to avoid duplication and preserve complementarity.

13. Thanks to its policy of neutrality, ICRC had been able to operate in very difficult circumstances. In Afghanistan, it had gained acceptance by all parties and obtained access to remote mountain areas which other humanitarian organizations had not reached. In Israel and the occupied and autonomous territories, its existing infrastructure had enabled it to make plans to increase the number of staff on the ground and step up food aid operations in the West Bank together with WFP. In Angola, since the signing of the 4 April ceasefire agreement, the main thrust of ICRC activity had been protection and the tracing and reuniting of families.

14. Lack of security was a persistent concern and was related to a complex set of factors. The threshold of tolerance was difficult to determine, particularly in identity-based conflicts and where state structures had collapsed. The problem was worsened by economic considerations, such as the pursuit by individuals of financial gain or the control and exploitation of natural resources.

15. ICRC saw its intervention on the ground as being based on international humanitarian law, which

provided a sound basis for impartiality. Its missions of assistance and protection were not separate, but inextricably linked. It sought to keep civilians safe from abuses of power and to come to the aid of victims. It believed in a holistic approach to helping victims but also recognized the need for targeted assistance to meet specific needs, such as those of women and children. Those considerations underpinned its efforts to support families and restore family links destroyed by conflict. Internally displaced persons were covered by the traditional ICRC mandate, not treated as a separate group. Determining just how to distinguish such individuals from residents or returnees was difficult, particularly in Africa, where many sought safety with relatives, who also needed support.

16. The approach of ICRC to its mission was unique: it sought to provide assistance and protection based firstly on international humanitarian law and secondly on its status as a neutral and independent body operating in close proximity to victims. That approach also allowed the ICRC to operate in cooperation with other humanitarian entities on a basis of complementarity.

17. **Mr. Mountain** (United Nations, Office for the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator), Panellist, said that reaching the vulnerable, an essential precondition for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, typically posed four immediate challenges: securing access to disaster/emergency victims, ensuring security for humanitarian workers, establishing a structure to identify and reach those in need (coordination, logistics, communication, information), and mobilizing the necessary resources and supplies. Humanitarian assistance must be provided impartially, irrespective of gender, colour, ethnic origin or political opinion, solely on the basis of need.

18. The simultaneous occurrence of armed conflict and natural disaster was not as uncommon as it might seem. In the first half of 2002, two major natural disasters had taken place in the context of complex humanitarian emergencies: the eruption of the Mount Nyirangongo volcano in the town of Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the earthquakes in the Nahrin district of Afghanistan. While, in such double crises, the fundamentals of the humanitarian response remained the same, greater speed and better coordination were called for. The three key elements of effective coordination were: a clear plan, including an appropriate division of labour; rapid mobilization of needed resources; and the establishment of timely and effective information services.

19. Experienced personnel must be immediately on site to assess situations and needs and establish response mechanisms when governments were unable to fulfil that role. The United Nations system had developed mechanisms for rapid deployment to that end, including United Nations Disaster Assessment Coordination (UNDAC) teams managed by OCHA.

20. Humanitarian personnel already deployed for complex emergency operations could facilitate a rapid response to a natural disaster, as they had in Goma. However, since natural disasters often required specialized skills and expertise that were not immediately available (e.g., in Goma, there had been no volcanologists to provide scientific advice), humanitarian agencies should incorporate foreseeable natural disasters in their contingency planning and strengthen their capacity for rapid deployment of specialist resources.

21. Sometimes media coverage could help mobilize urgently needed resources in a combined complex emergency and natural disaster. For example, the volcano near Goma had drawn attention to an area largely ignored during nearly four years of violent conflict. However, when natural disasters were overlooked by the international community, a rapid source of adequate resources was vital. He therefore welcomed the efforts of a number of donor governments and the European Union to set up standby mechanisms. There was also a need to set up a coordination structure at the national, international and local levels and a mechanism to provide reliable information as a vital tool for both coordination and mobilization of resources.

22. **Mr. Charpentier** (United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator for Burundi), Panellist, said that the fragility of the peace process initiated in Burundi with the signing of the August 2000 agreement posed a particular challenge for humanitarian intervention. The conflict had reached a new peak, yet there had never been so great an opportunity for negotiation between the Government and the armed opposition groups. The humanitarian situation remained precarious: between 450,000 and 500,000 refugees were living outside the country,

primarily in the United Republic of Tanzania; over 400,000 people were internally displaced within Burundi; and at any given moment, between 50,000 and 200,000 people were displaced by conflicts in one region or another.

23. It was extremely difficult to carry out humanitarian operations in areas subject to insecurity. The key challenges were: to provide continuous assistance in those areas; to protect internally displaced persons, of whom women were both highly vulnerable to violence and valuable actors in recovery and reconstruction; to obtain reliable information on the insecure areas; and to carry out operations under the constraints imposed by the elaborate system designed to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers.

24. In 2001, a framework had been developed to protect internally displaced and other vulnerable persons. It included the Burundi Minister of Defence, Minister of the Interior, and Minister for Repatriation and Resettlement of Refugees and Displaced Persons, and representatives of United Nations agencies and national and international NGOs, a composition which reflected the Government's primary responsibility to provide humanitarian workers with access and protection. The framework provided a forum for dialogue between national and external authorities in the search for joint solutions to Burundi's problems and had resulted in the formation of a follow-up technical group as its operational and monitoring arm.

25. When, for example, rebels had occupied the Kinama section of Bujumbura for two weeks in 2001, displacing 50,000 residents, a team had been set up to make daily visits and, once the rebels had been evicted by the army, to ensure the displaced persons' safe return. For reasons relating to sociological bias, the army battalion assigned to monitor that process had, in fact, been attacking the returnees and had had to be replaced by a different battalion.

26. The establishment of a dialogue between humanitarian workers and the armed opposition groups had been a lengthy, sensitive process but had improved humanitarian operations, particularly in insecure areas. Through transparency, trust and an absence of political considerations, the parties to the conflict had been led to adopt a humanitarian perspective. One result was the creation of ad hoc humanitarian corridors so that assistance could be provided to specific groups of internally displaced persons, but the only real solution would be a ceasefire.

27. **The President** asked the United Nations Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator to serve as moderator for the question-and-answer portion of the panel discussion.

28. **Mr. Nteturuye** (Burundi) said that the Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator for Burundi and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Bujumbura had been of great help in addressing the humanitarian needs of the thousands of Burundians who had been physically and morally devastated by war. However, his Government found it difficult to understand the position taken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which had suspended assistance to the refugees returning to the southern and eastern provinces. He understood the uneasiness of UNHCR, given the level of insecurity in those provinces. However, the situation was improving: most of the formerly exiled political leaders had returned to Burundi and had assumed posts in the transitional institutions established in November 2001. Moreover, the refugee camps were subject to attack by bandits who forcibly recruited refugees to armed opposition groups. Given the choice of becoming involuntary "cannon fodder" or facing a difficult return to their families and friends in a country that was, after all, habitable, many had chosen the latter option.

29. In the light of that de facto situation, he hoped that UNHCR would reconsider its position, particularly as Burundi's other development partners were reluctant to intervene in areas which the United Nations had classified as Phase III and Phase IV security levels. Lives were being lost while representatives of the Government, NGOs and United Nations agencies discussed the matter. At the 2000 and 2001 donor conferences in Paris and Geneva, respectively, it had been decided that the armed opposition must not be allowed to hold the entire country hostage and that of the people of Burundi, who sought peace, should be helped. However, the promised funds were slow to arrive, and he feared that the international community was being influenced by extremists who wanted the peace process to fail.

30. **Mr. Backström** (Finland) asked the panellists whether there were any statistics on the number of people who required assistance but received none, not

only during complex emergencies covered by the consolidated appeals process but during natural disasters and other types of emergency. For example, hundreds of thousands of new aid recipients had recently been identified in Angola, and it had been reported that there were millions of vulnerable people in the jungles of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He also wondered at what stage a recipient was considered no longer eligible for aid and whether United Nations agencies and NGOs used the same criteria of vulnerability in establishing that threshold.

31. **Mr. Flores Gómez** (Mexico) said that his country's National System of Civilian Protection, which integrated and complemented emergency and disaster responses at all levels (national, state and local) in Mexico's federal structure, had recently begun focusing on prevention as well as reaction. The Natural Disaster Fund was now authorized to set aside up to 20 per cent of its budget every year as reserves for the System's new prevention component.

32. He suggested that other countries should also establish emergency and natural disaster funds and that a similar fund at the international level should be launched within the United Nations, including a prevention component for the poorest countries, which were also the most vulnerable to disasters. Studies had shown that the poorest sectors of society tended to live in high-risk places, such as hillsides, river banks and beaches, and were therefore the most vulnerable. The question was always the same: how best to help the vulnerable populations. Perhaps the solution was to finance specific projects for prevention that included implementing mechanisms such as supply-management and disaster-inventory systems. Assistance could also be provided within specific contexts, such as training programmes or with the installation of early-warning systems or other equipment.

33. At the outset, an international group should be created to monitor, compile and analyse studies by various international organizations on civilian protection and disaster prevention with a view to formulating specific proposals for national and international funds. Through civilian protection awareness-building campaigns, populations must be encouraged to participate in their design. An immediate response programme should be offered to those living in high-risk places in order to train them in first-aid responses pending the arrival of rescue and evacuation teams. Input from residents of vulnerable areas would be invaluable to specialists engaged in risk-assessment mapping.

34. **Mr. Højersholt** (Observer for Denmark) said that he wholeheartedly agreed with the Executive Director of UNICEF that vulnerability did not equal helplessness and that disaster victims were potentially strong contributors to their own development. Such an approach would ensure that their human rights were better respected, their needs better met and their skills better developed. It might also be useful to promote self-reliance through community service or small-scale business and agriculture grants.

35. Turning to the presentation by the representative of WFP, he said it was obvious that response strategies for southern Africa would have to rely on careful targeting of the most vulnerable populations. It was generally acknowledged that the humanitarian crisis in that region had been caused by a combination of natural and manmade disasters, including drought, flooding, failed government policies and devastated economies. Moreover, southern Africa had faced widespread famine on a number of occasions, most recently in 1992; he wondered what could be done to increase resilience and prevent a recurrence of the problem. National Governments must assume greater responsibility for reducing conditions of vulnerability, bearing in mind the need for long-term rehabilitation of the agricultural sector. He asked how WFP viewed the development of policy dialogue with governments on such issues and what role the Southern African Development Community (SADC) could play in facilitating such a dialogue.

36. **Mr. Morikawa** (Japan) asked what measures had been taken to promote the cooperation between donor and recipients witnessed during the two volcanic eruptions discussed. Turning to the remarks made by the representative of Burundi, he asked what stages had been necessary to achieve the satisfactory relationship existing between the Government and the international presence on the one hand and the opposition armed groups on the other.

37. **Ms. Bellamy** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund), Panellist, said that, whereas in the first half of the twentieth century most victims of war had been military personnel, in the second half they had been mainly civilians, many of them women and children. It was encouraging that some women had resolved to find solutions to their plight, one example

being a group of women in Somalia who, transcending clan differences, had together started a school so that their children would receive an education despite the conflict situation. Another motive force for peace was the Children's Peace Movement in Colombia. The clarity and honesty of some of the young people who had addressed the Security Council attested to their determination to take action on their own behalf, rather than remain in a situation of dependence.

38. Since natural disasters were hard to prevent and had greatest consequences for the very poor, she agreed that poverty reduction should be part of preventive action. As to when vulnerability came to an end, it was important that the international community should be measured in its response to sustained vulnerability by building self-reliance among recipients. Timing was an important factor. While water had to be provided as a matter of urgency in the wake of an earthquake, it was important to go on to the stage of building capacity so that dependency was not protracted; yet, by that time, all too often the media and, hence, the public had lost interest.

39. **Mr. Graisse** (Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme), Panellist, said that the millions who went hungry every day required access to food, either by being lifted out of poverty or in the form of direct food aid. Yet, only one tenth of the world's starving had received help in 2001. Despite the WFP vulnerability assessment mapping programme, tough decisions were called for as to where shrinking resources should be spent, often at the expense of equally needy areas. Policy dialogue was conducted with governments on matters such as the distribution of grain and NGO cooperation in food distribution. Also, SADC had been approached and offered assistance. With the cooperation of the Rwandan Government, which had made available its surplus emergency resources, it had been possible to respond rapidly to the victims of the two volcanic eruptions in Goma.

40. **Mr. Forster** (Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross), Panellist, said that vulnerability could continue for a long time; the re-establishment of family units or determining the fate of missing persons, for example, could take years or even decades. Assistance included the re-establishment of economic security, the viability of households and projects to provide agricultural inputs in rural areas. A situation could change for the worse even in a post-conflict situation, making it difficult to determine when those concerned were no longer vulnerable — hence the permanent network of regional delegates who monitored and evaluated situations of vulnerability.

41. **Mr. Mountain** (United Nations Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator (OCHA)), Panellist, said it would be naïve to suggest that the needs of all vulnerable people could be met, even though a great deal was being done by groups such as the consortia of NGOs and the Red Cross. There would certainly be a stage at which vulnerability needs would be seen as part of poverty reduction programmes, as the societies concerned became more stable. Following the volcanic eruptions near Goma, large segments of the population had fled to safety in Rwanda, but many of them had returned before it was really safe to do so in order to ensure that their property was secure. There remained the danger of further volcanic activity and the collaboration established with the Rwandan authorities continued.

42. In connection with the suggestion made by the representative of Mexico, he said that United Nations standby funding for rehabilitation efforts did exist, and OCHA had responsibility for small amounts of money for immediate coordination on the ground as emergencies occurred. While everyone involved in natural disaster relief believed in strengthening measures for providing housing, training and contingency planning for immediate response, it was also important to mobilize the community to provide its own response. For instance, it was a well-known fact that people buried under earthquake rubble were often rescued by their neighbours.

43. **Mr. Charpentier** (United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator for Burundi), Panellist, replying to the question posed by the representative of Burundi, said that approximately 30,000 refugees had returned to Burundi, some on their own and others with assistance. From the humanitarian point of view, assistance must continue to be provided to the refugees in order to enable them to return safely and reintegrate in village life. The security situation in the eastern provinces was being closely monitored, and UNHCR would undoubtedly modify its decision when circumstances permitted. He agreed that it was important to promote the self-reliance of the Burundians and felt that simultaneous relief and development assistance was the best approach. Substantial donor support to that end had just been

solicited, but the response thus far fell far short of what was needed.

44. Replying to the representative of Japan, he said that establishing contact with members of armed opposition groups had been an elaborate and lengthy process, whose thorniest and most time-consuming elements had been gaining the confidence of external partners and ensuring transparency between the parties to the conflict. Improved relations between the Government and the armed opposition groups, coupled with greater intervention by external humanitarian partners in recent years, had greatly facilitated the launching of the open tripartite dialogue between the Government, members of armed opposition groups and the humanitarian community.

45. **Ms. Golberg** (Observer for Canada) wondered whether neighbouring countries and local embassies could be called on for help in maintaining access by humanitarian workers. Referring to the dialogue with armed factions described by the previous speaker, she enquired whether the representative of OCHA could report on the status of the handbook on establishing contact with armed groups mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee had also developed a handbook on obtaining access to vulnerable groups under its Sheltering Tree Project.

46. **Mr. Garvelink** (United States of America) commended the activities of the United Nations and ICRC and the decision to give top priority to humanitarian workers' access to vulnerable groups and expressed support for the WFP approach to coordinating relief efforts in southern Africa, particularly its cooperation with non-governmental organizations. The success of the humanitarian information centres, particularly in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, should be highlighted. He wondered whether the nutrition and rehabilitation activities which WFP conducted for small subsistence farmers took into account the HIV/AIDS problem.

47. **Ms. Mahouve Same** (Cameroon) asked what measures were being taken by governments, with assistance from United Nations agencies, to provide relief to scores of vulnerable persons suffering from HIV/AIDS, malnutrition and other health problems in temporary security zones in Burundi.

48. **Mr. Mountain** (United Nations Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator (OCHA)), Panellist, said that the handbook on civilian protection referred to by the Observer for Canada was still a work in progress.

49. **Mr. Forster** (Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross), Panellist, agreed with the representative of Canada on the importance of maintaining an open and transparent dialogue with all the parties to a conflict. However, in circumstances where that might not be possible, dialogue could be sought with actors who had a direct link to the parties to the conflict and were likely to have an influence on them. For example, in the past year, ICRC had attempted to establish links with economic actors.

50. **Mr. Graisse** (Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme), Panellist, said that, without the $135 million contributed by the United States, the Programme would be far less effective. Children who had become heads of household as a result of the rapidly spreading AIDS epidemic in southern Africa were currently the main recipients of food aid. The epidemic also affected their schooling. Teachers fell victim to AIDS, and small farmers incapacitated by AIDS were often forced to take their children out of school and put them to work. In its emergency operations, WFP distributed supplementary food at health centres as a way of encouraging AIDS victims who had contracted other diseases, such as tuberculosis, to complete their course of treatment. The need for greater quantities of special drugs in such cases was pushing up the cost of WFP emergency operations.

51. **Mr. Charpentier** (United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator for Burundi), replying to the representative of Cameroon, said that the security situation was determined by the United Nations system. Personnel on the ground understood that the security situation was changing and that a declaration of "unsafe" could be lifted. Two thirds of Burundi territory was considered "sufficiently safe" for humanitarian and development activities and for personnel to have access, even at night. Only the rural areas east of Bujumbura and a few other provinces were still classified as "unsafe". Nonetheless, personnel of the United Nations system and NGOs, particularly humanitarian workers, monitored the situation in the temporary security zones on a daily

basis, and barring troop movements or actual conflict, entered by day.

52. **Mr. Mountain** (United Nations Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator (OCHA)), summarizing the panel discussion, said that access by humanitarian workers to vulnerable populations, particularly displaced persons, women and children, was of major concern to all. Emphasis had been placed on the importance of: negotiating with the parties to a conflict; not equating vulnerability with helplessness; involving beneficiaries in planning and implementation; preventing the deaths of persons caught in the crossfire, where split-second timing could mean the difference between life and death; and guaranteeing the safety and security of humanitarian workers.

53. As for natural disasters, the main themes had been: strengthening the response capacities of local communities; understanding the relationship between inadequate development and vulnerability to natural disasters; and improving standby mechanisms for both funding and information.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

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Provisional summary record of the 26th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 16 July 2002, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Buallay (Vice-President) ..... (Bahrain)

Contents

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

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02-48437 (E)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/57/77-E/2002/63 and A/57/79-E/2002/76)

Panel discussion on the transition from relief to development in the context of complex humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters

1. **Mr. Brahimi** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan), Panellist, said that Afghanistan was a prime example of a country struggling to move from a situation of humanitarian emergency to relief and reconstruction. When the Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan was signed in Bonn, Afghanistan was in a very challenging situation: 22 years of war had devastated its economy, and 4 years of drought had exacerbated the effects of the conflict on the population; up to 60 per cent of the population was dependent on humanitarian aid; the Government which had controlled 90 per cent of the territory was not internationally recognized and, as a result, the United Nations and donors had not had a national counterpart for 5 years; concerns existed over the persecution of ethnic minorities. At that time, Afghanistan represented the world's largest humanitarian programme, with few options to pursue recovery and reconstruction. Against that background, the United Nations was currently developing a number of new initiatives and approaches that endeavoured to build on the lessons learned in other contexts.

2. The United Nations strategy focused on a number of key elements. First, while meeting the most urgent humanitarian needs of the Afghan population of 6 million, it would support and encourage the transition from relief to recovery programming by all international actors. It would also contribute to a shift in focus on the part of the international community from self-regulation to Government capacity-building and ownership. It would then provide support for capacity development of provincial administrations, combined with delegation of programming authority and resources, to allow rapid, flexible and area-specific recovery programmes in the worst-affected areas. It would tie recovery and reconstruction programming closely to the political process to allow all components of United Nations activity to complement each other. There must be a robust and Afghan-centric approach to human rights protection and substantial improvement in the situation of women and girls by mainstreaming gender in all programming and targeting support to women in vulnerable communities.

3. Progress had already been made towards many of those objectives. Refugees and internally displaced persons had returned home in record numbers, much faster than expected; well over 3 million children had returned to school, compared to initial expectations of 1.6 million. Such progress had generated its own challenges: how to help rural communities become viable so that returnees would not gravitate to the cities, and how to ensure that children had decent schools and trained teachers. Surveying and clearance of mines and unexploded ordnance was accelerating, and the transfer of mine action from United Nations management to complete Afghan control was being implemented. Nationwide polio immunization continued, and public works programmes in several cities had begun. Despite huge logistical difficulties, civil service salaries had been paid in most parts of the country. The Transitional Administration would face challenges as it tried to continue paying salaries. An indigenous and independent media had begun to re-emerge.

4. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was working, but it was not yet fully integrated and the differing and sometimes contradictory rules, regulations and cultures of the peacekeeping, political and assistance institutions had not helped matters. The extensive process of reviewing the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme (ITAP) with national authorities had resulted in a more coherent approach, and the ongoing integration of ITAP into the national development framework and budget meant that there was growing congruence of objectives between the Afghan administration, the United Nations and the other partners. Better management and circulation of information remained a major challenge.

5. It was possible to draw some early conclusions and lessons from the first months of the work of UNAMA in Afghanistan. The United Nations was expected to play a key role in post-conflict environments, and in helping governments to reassert their policy-making and coordination roles. It should

combine its capacities in the political, human rights, humanitarian and development fields into a coherent whole. Attempts to carry out integrated interventions in a post-conflict environment were strengthened by clear support and mandates from Member States. The strengthening of the mission's management responsibilities should assist the coordination of international recovery and reconstruction work, and the considerable benefits to be found in joint work by the political and relief/recovery components were already clear. Additional United Nations reform would be needed at the administrative and support levels to ensure that integrated missions had the necessary flexibility to meet their obligations. Donors played a critical role in post-conflict environments and should take a more proactive role in agreeing on strategy, supporting the Government, deciding on donor coordination mechanisms and encouraging agencies to adopt a more cohesive approach. Greater attention should be paid to the importance of non-governmental organizations in situations like Afghanistan, and they should be more fully engaged in strategic and operational planning. Governments and non-governmental organizations should work out new relationships in post-conflict settings.

6. **Mr. Lubbers** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)), Panellist, said that the transition from relief to development was key to the work of his Office. From the beginning of its involvement in a refugee situation, it had an eye on the solution: either repatriation, local integration or resettlement. Its task in Afghanistan was to help the country through a difficult transition, and a simultaneous approach on the humanitarian and development fronts was needed. The new initiative involving former combatants would begin with demilitarization and demobilization and move on to reintegration and rehabilitation.

7. The general approach to refugees could be called "the four Rs": repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Some recent progress had been made in the local integration of refugees, as development assistance focused on refugee areas could benefit the local population as well. In Zambia, for example, refugees were not seen as a burden but as potential agents of development.

8. His Office was working more and more closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in providing for the needs of refugees. The UNDP presence in Afghanistan had been particularly valuable. Currently, about 90 per cent of assistance was in the form of relief and 10 per cent development, but the aim was to reverse those percentages in the near future. The Government still required support and assistance as it gained strength, but eventually it would own the development process. The commitment of bilateral donors, for instance the Group of Eight or the European Union, was essential.

9. Meeting the needs of refugees was key to peace, and without integration, there could be no sustainable peace, as groups with no hope were vulnerable to recruitment by groups wishing to prolong conflict. Instead of being seen as separate, humanitarian assistance and development must be seen as joint ventures.

10. **Mr. Malloch Brown** (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme), Panellist, said that the United Nations had been on trial in Afghanistan, with the world watching to see if it could operate as a single system. The successes achieved there in a relatively short time had demonstrated that the Organization was capable of coming together to begin building a State under the least promising circumstances. The United Nations system was attempting to determine what were the right institutional ways to bridge the gap from relief to reconstruction but was finding it difficult to be sufficiently flexible.

11. Some preliminary conclusions could be drawn from the experience in Afghanistan thus far. In order to bring the many parts of the system together — peace-building, humanitarian action, development, human rights and return of refugees — coherent leadership at the field level, of the kind provided by Mr. Brahimi, was indispensable.

12. A population emerging from conflict had a list of priorities and demands. In Afghanistan, they included schooling for the children, security and the rule of law, such basic structures of government as a functioning judiciary and a national police force, public services like health care, and abundant employment opportunities in both urban and rural areas. It has been decided that it would be more sensible in the long run to assist the Government in meeting those needs, thereby building the capacity of national and local government, rather than provide an agency response, even though the latter might have been more rapid. The

Government also faced special challenges in reintegrating combatants and repatriating refugees, an exercise which was politically complex, logistically challenging, and potentially destabilizing. Currently there was a sense of passing the baton from the humanitarian agencies to the development agencies like UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and eventually, to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), when the stage of high-cost reconstruction projects would begin.

13. In 2001, UNHCR had understandably overestimated the refugee exodus from Afghanistan; in 2002, it had underestimated their return. Even with excellent planning, it was impossible to fully predict humanitarian emergencies, and a certain shifting of priorities was thus inevitable. Despite pleas for flexible funding, and despite the risks inherent in delaying demobilization, the system did not allow for a common pooling of resources for relief and development. Unlike its partner the World Bank, the United Nations did not possess the financial capacity to lead when speed was of the essence, even though it usually possessed the necessary local experience. The system's funding was organized according to the priorities of partner Governments, and refugee populations were not always high on their list of priorities as expressed in poverty reduction strategy papers, inter alia. He thus wished to reiterate the call for greater flexibility and additional resources.

14. **Mr. Cherpitel** (Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), Panellist, recalled that the World Disasters Report 2001 had focused on recovery, which was a main element of the transition from relief to development. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies sought to help manage that transition in a manner that better served the victims of disaster and proposed to share experiences in that regard.

15. No sooner had the first earthquake hit El Salvador in 2001 than the Salvadoran Red Cross had activated its emergency contingency plan. Search and rescue teams consisting of some 200 personnel had operated in the most severely affected areas, supported by more than 1,000 volunteers. A preliminary appeal had been launched in a matter of hours, and a plan of action developed within two weeks, the priority being to help respond to the immediate needs of the affected population. Some objectives had nevertheless involved longer-term requirements, including psychosocial support, improved health care at the local level and strengthening the disaster response capacity of both the Salvadoran Red Cross and local communities. Significantly, those objectives had been established with an emphasis on local input, the aim being to shift from immediate response to local capacity-building.

16. Currently, the focus of the International Federation in El Salvador was on development, in particular on programmes to address structural vulnerabilities. Attention was also being paid to possible future calamities. Such a shift to longer-term concerns had been facilitated by a developmental approach to disasters and the organizational capacity to translate such a way of thinking into specific objectives, programmes and plans at a very early stage.

17. Disasters were all too often handled as surprise events requiring special interventions, task forces, separate budget lines and coordination mechanisms. In reality, disasters were often predictable and should be viewed as being situated within the development process as such.

18. The issues surrounding transition from relief to development — and the institutional response to recovery — were rooted in the way the relationship between disasters and development was conceptualized. Comprehensive strategies for simultaneously addressing the immediate needs of disaster victims and the requirements of development must thus be devised. Humane solutions for disaster-affected people did not, after all, require massive funding or sophisticated solutions, but rather must be willing to put people at the centre of disaster recovery.

19. In response to the Venezuelan landslides in 1999, the International Federation had made water and sanitation a priority. The first step had been to provide distribution, the next to ensure regular availability. The approach had been people-centred, with the emphasis on involving the affected communities by having them devise and supervise schedules for drawing water from emergency tanks. The focus had been on enabling people to participate in their own communities rather than on lecturing or managing them.

20. Such efforts did not provide complete solutions, but they did contribute to the re-establishment of normality by creating the conditions under which other partners — such as the United Nations system — could address other important issues at an earlier stage.

21. The experience of Hurricane Mitch had caused the International Federation to rethink its response mechanisms, methodologies and post-disaster work with affected populations. In particular, a Pan-American Disaster Response Unit had been established in Panama to strengthen regional disaster preparedness and response capacity.

22. The value of pre-disaster planning had been revealed in Cuba when Hurricane Michelle — the most powerful storm since 1944 — had struck in 2001. Only five people had died thanks to successful civil defence planning, which had ensured the timely evacuation of some 700,000 people, with the Cuban Red Cross playing a limited but predefined role. Search and rescue and emergency health-care plans had also been rapidly activated. Although preparedness was not a sufficient condition for recovery, it could indeed make a significant contribution. The key to recovery was direct participation by local communities in the identification and implementation of humanitarian and early post-emergency programmes.

23. In the aftermath of Hurricane Keith in 2000, the Belize Red Cross had undertaken advocacy in favour of a more integrated approach to disaster, resulting in improved cooperation with the host authorities. Belize was now better prepared to face the next disaster.

24. The challenges of addressing both emergency needs and development requirements were highly complex, hence the importance of cooperation between agencies and organizations based on comparative advantages. In particular, it was necessary to build risk reduction into development planning, since championing development alone was not sufficient. Development could in fact exacerbate disasters by degrading the natural environment or moving people from quakeproof shanties to quake-vulnerable housing. More resources must also be invested in disaster preparedness. Achieving risk-resilient development policies would take decades, but disasters hit each year.

25. Priority disaster-preparedness measures must include: risk and vulnerability mapping; disaster awareness and education; early-warning and evacuation systems; the stockpiling of relief materials; training in response skills; and planning at all levels to ensure coordination of response. Local capacities must also be strengthened to ensure that communities had the knowledge and tools they needed to articulate their needs and priorities in the recovery phase. Lastly, appropriate financial mechanisms must be created. Donor Governments must devise solutions to the funding gap by developing mechanisms that allowed the rapid disbursement of resources in the immediate post-disaster phase. The issue was not necessarily that of volume, but of flexibility and predictability.

26. Development processes should be planned in such a way as to ensure that they had the capacity to absorb the shock of disasters.

27. **Ms. McAskie** (Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)), Moderator, invited delegations to put questions to the panel.

28. **Mr. Hojersholt** (Observer for Denmark) said that his delegation welcomed the emphasis laid by the panellists on durable solutions, in particular with regard to the reintegration and repatriation of refugees in post-conflict situations. Denmark had recently created a new budget line to support efforts in that connection and had been most recently involved in UNHCR efforts in Zambia.

29. International and regional stability were the key to sustainable reintegration of refugees, as was the smooth transition between relief and development. His delegation welcomed the coordinated and integrated approach adopted by UNAMA, which should be replicated in other complex emergencies.

30. **Mr. Brazhnikov** (Russian Federation) commended the efforts of the United Nations system to help bridge the transition between relief and development in Afghanistan, expressing support for a long-term, stabilizing role for UNAMA. The private sector also had an important role to play in joint ventures with development partners. The Russian Federation for its part had pledged some 50,000 tonnes of grain and was also contributing in the area of road construction and the training of mechanics, health personnel and firemen. Long-term support was also required in the energy sector, given that entire provinces still lacked electricity. Since the international community's humanitarian involvement in Afghanistan was approaching the one-year mark, there was a need to take stock of results before moving to the next phase.

31. **Mr. Bishnoi** (India) requested clarification of the comment in paragraph 69 of the Secretary-General's report (A/57/77-E/2002/63) to the effect that, unless

humanitarian funding increased significantly, transitional activities would need to draw on money from traditional development budgets, and that donors should find better ways of accessing those resources, perhaps funnelling them through the consolidated appeals process.

32. **Mr. Brahimi** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan), Panellist, said that all phases of assistance were crucial in a complex emergency of the type in Afghanistan, which was slowly trying to consolidate a peace expected to remain fragile for some time. Twenty-three years of hostilities had all but destroyed the State and left the people tremendously vulnerable. The aim of the emergency work was to keep the country from sliding back into war, and thus it would have to go on even as reconstruction began. During peacetime reconstruction, schooling and hospital care, which continued as best as they could during emergencies, became long-term enterprises.

33. The assistance programme in Afghanistan would certainly profit from lessons learned during the many years of United Nations humanitarian action in and after conflicts. The integrated approach was being tried in Afghanistan. The Government would gradually be helped to take charge of all the programmes, but for the moment United Nations personnel were really running the programmes for the Government. Mine clearance was a task that the Government might soon take over, and it was hoped that it would also begin to run the human rights commission that had been set up. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNICEF had done wonders to get the current school year started and the expectation was that they would have to do much less the following year and still less the next.

34. **Mr. Backstrom** (Finland) said that, since the United Nations could apparently handle only one complex emergency at a time, he wondered where the funding would be found for other peace-building operations that also desperately required help. Also, he asked what the UNHCR was proposing should be done to put the idea of self-help by refugees into practice.

35. **Mr. dos Santos** (Observer for Mozambique) said that his own country's experience had shown that coordination among international agencies, the host Government, donor Governments and non-governmental organizations was vital if the humanitarian assistance was to reach the needy. Mozambique was an example of coordination by consensus, where the flexible use of funds had worked well. The capacity-building referred to by the UNDP Administrator had always to respond to the expectations and needs of the people if it was to be sustainable and avert a recurrence of conflict.

36. **Mr. Khalid** (Pakistan) asked how prepared UNHCR had been for the sudden massive influx of Afghan refugees from Pakistan into Afghanistan. Had contingency plans been prepared for that and future situations?

37. **Mr. Lubbers** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said, in response to the representative of India, that a resolution, currently being drafted, on the subject of strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance included a provision calling for steps to be taken to ensure that the consolidated appeals process always contained adequate plans to unite relief and transitional programmes. It was common for donor countries to ask which agency had the comparative advantage in a particular activity, but as the staff in the field knew, all the agencies were involved in one way or another in the relief phase, whenever action had to be quick and materials secured immediately. The rural shelter programme in Afghanistan, for instance, was addressing a relief as well as a housing problem. He would suggest that donors should support integrated programmes combining humanitarian, reintegration and reconstruction components. In that regard, he had been heartened to hear about the kind of budgetary arrangements made by the Government of Denmark.

38. Self-help by refugees meant, in the context of repatriation programmes, that the returnees would, under United Nations projects, immediately start to rebuild their homes, repair irrigation systems and the like. In projects in countries of first asylum, the United Nations was advocating the local integration of refugees in remote areas, urging Governments to allow them to begin farming or give them the necessary permits to participate otherwise in the economic life of the area. Governments did not like that kind of project, yet if ministries allocated the needed funds to remote areas they would see a double return on their investment and would become convinced of the potential of self-help.

39. UNHCR was always trying to repeat the enormous success it had had in Mozambique, where it had carried out one of the largest repatriation operations ever undertaken. In the case of Afghanistan, UNHCR had known the numbers of returnees that could be expected from Pakistan but not the speed with which they would begin to return home. It had on the other hand been surprised that so few had as yet returned from Iran. In any case, the repatriation inflow was not a dramatic problem: thus far, 1.2 million returnees from Pakistan had been absorbed within the budget, although perhaps more funds would eventually be needed for rural housing.

40. **Mr. Cherpitel** (Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), Panellist, observed that Mozambique's comments about capacity-building applied equally to civil society activities. In Somalia, for instance, 47 Red Crescent clinics had been set up, with World Bank funding, all over the country and were the only such example of country-wide assistance. Such a project cost money but not necessarily a huge amount.

41. Regarding natural disasters, he said that in Bangladesh, for example, a Red Crescent early warning system on cyclones and flooding had been in operation for 15 years and was a very efficient, low-cost, civil-society, grass-roots project that had saved many lives.

42. **Mr. Morikawa** (Japan) asked if there was any concerted effort by the agencies involved to establish preparedness projects in countries prone to natural disasters, where such projects would be very important in prediction or mitigation and would facilitate the transition from relief to development.

43. In complex emergencies, it was not uncommon for fighting to continue in certain spots while in others development efforts could be started. He wondered what exactly triggered the start of a transition effort. It might be that coordination by the political departments of the United Nations was necessary.

44. **Mr. Olin** (Sweden) observed that the donor ownership being advocated would require a conceptual change in the capitals which controlled the budgets for the transition programmes in the crisis countries. Transition projects in many cases needed to be financed from development cooperation budgets; and even in Sweden, where both humanitarian and development cooperation budgets were already under one roof, a special task force had to be established to deal with transition situations. Donor coordination meetings had to be held, bringing together both humanitarian and development staff early on in the process. Furthermore, the transition debate could be brought to the operational arena of the development partners themselves. The topic could, for instance, be included in the coordination segment of the Council's substantive session in 2003.

45. **Mr. Schillings** (Netherlands) asked whether the lessons learned in Afghanistan would make that programme a model for future programmes in post-conflict situations.

46. **Ms. Larusdottir** (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that the representatives of development partners with whom she had met recently in Kabul, had all said that the single most important thing the international community could do for Afghanistan in the health sector was to ensure that the funds were forthcoming and to start to build capacity even while delivering health services so that the Afghans could absorb the resources. She had been told that reconstruction and recovery efforts needed to be accelerated, and that decentralization in both health budgets and management support was crucial. The international community must stop focusing on Kabul and begin investing not in hospitals but in mid-level institutions throughout the country. All had agreed that there was still a great need for humanitarian assistance but also that much was already being accomplished.

47. As was common in post-conflict situations, the institutional weakness in Afghanistan limited the ability of the Ministry of Health to influence the formulation of rehabilitation policies. As a result, the donors and the international financial institutions had wide room for manoeuvre but there was an accountability problem. The choices made regarding the volume of aid, its channels and targets would shape the future health system, yet the actual running of the system would eventually fall on the shoulders of the Government. It was essential to create a system that the Government could afford in the future.

48. **Mr. Graisse** (Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)) recalled that in the mid-1990s the Programme had been well financed for emergencies and protracted relief operations but not for development operations. In 1998 the Executive Board had decided to divide its operations into three

categories: emergency, relief and recovery, and development. The relief and recovery category, after a slow start, was currently the best funded and had extensive operations, for example in Cambodia, Mozambique and Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, the Programme had been present for more than fifteen years, providing both relief/recovery and development activities adapted to a changing situation. Valid and well conceived programmes in all three categories were generally well received and well funded.

49. **Mr. Cherpitel** (Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), Panellist, in response to the representative of Japan who had asked about preparedness projects, stressed the importance of involving civil society in planning, and said that disaster preparedness plans had been developed in many countries in coordination with UNDP, which worked closely with Governments, while the International Federation worked closely with local government. He stressed that both Governments and non-governmental organizations must be more proactive in disaster preparedness planning.

50. In response to the representative of Sweden, he emphasized the importance of building the capacity of the International Federation's local societies. In five countries, including Sweden, a tripartite advisory group had been created with representation from the Government, the International Federation and the National Red Cross Society, in order to focus efforts on local capacity-building. With regard to availability of adequate funding, he said that the International Federation had created two funds: the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund, a revolving fund replenished through appeals which could rapidly provide up to 5 million Swiss francs; and a Capacity-Building Fund for small projects which could provide approximately 100,000 Swiss francs for investments in countries over a period of three to four years.

51. **Mr. Brown** (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme), Panellist, said, with regard to post-conflict situations, that the most important lesson learned from the highly successful experience in Mozambique had been the crucial role played by the local government, which had displayed the political will to focus on priorities and ensure capacity-building, training and human resources development, despite limited capacity, as part of an organized strategy. It had shown the necessary determination to overcome obstacles, for example with regard to the reintegration of former combatants.

52. Turning to the area of funding, he said that although more resources were currently available in the relief continuum, it was also essential that there should be flexibility in the use of those funds so that they could be used to promote development. Rather than simply reacting to events, it was necessary to be proactive and undertake activities with high political impact in critical areas which would promote peace and avoid war. Donors should be ready to provide funding first and ask questions later.

53. **Mr. Lubbers** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Panellist, in response to the representative of Japan, said that the transition process was triggered by the decision to begin repatriation of refugees once security concerns had been addressed and there seemed to be the beginnings of peace. As the numbers of returning refugees increased, repatriation was accompanied by reintegration, followed by rehabilitation and reconstruction. Repatriation efforts should be coordinated with the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations whose responsibilities included assisting repatriated refugees to play a role in rebuilding society and contributing to sustainable peace.

54. The World Bank had shown leadership over the past several years, becoming increasingly active in post-conflict situations at a time when the governments of receiving countries were assuming increasing ownership for recovery efforts. In that context, he expressed doubts about conditionalities imposed by donors relating to good governance, promotion of democracy, and the like, which, while well intentioned, expected too much of Governments that were struggling to rebuild their country. The World Bank had been forward-looking in showing a readiness to provide credits and grants to serve as seed money for peace.

55. The international community's efforts did not always succeed. In Eritrea, for example, despite generous support, efforts had concentrated on the reintegration of former combatants, rather than of all refugees. The consolidated appeals process for Afghanistan had not been easy either. It was often difficult to know how to present the relationship between early repatriation and rebuilding. Most donors

strictly separated humanitarian assistance from development aid, and thus the international community had to deal with separate donor bureaucracies when it presented joint programmes. Often it was difficult to know to which donor bureaucracy a specific request should be addressed. Donors also sometimes seemed confused about which organizations they should address when providing funding. He suggested that they should support transition efforts by identifying which organizations had a comparative advantage, in other words, had the best chances for undertaking successful programmes. In a refugee situation, funding might first be directed to UNHCR then channelled to other organizations and programmes with a view to ensuring a seamless transfer to reintegration and rebuilding.

56. **Ms. McAskie** (Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Moderator, with regard to funding, said that just as institutions and organizations had had to rework their programmes and structures to ensure the transition from humanitarian assistance to recovery and development, funding mechanisms would likewise have to be reworked. The proposal in the report of the Secretary-General to have transitional funding from development budgets through the consolidated appeals process was only one option.

57. In response to the representative of the Netherlands concerning lessons learned from the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme (ITAP) for the Afghan People, she said that a clash of cultures had been revealed, and UNDP and OCHA were working together to review that experience and propose solutions. On the subject of disaster preparedness, she said that it was nearly impossible to predict accurately all disasters or prevent them. The human consequences of such disasters could however be prepared for, and the task of the international system was to support governments in reducing the effects of those disasters. The role of her Office was to ensure an initial response to emergency situations in cooperation with Governments and then to coordinate with UNDP, which focused more on capacity-building.

58. As to what triggered the transition to development, she said that peace and stability, even when fragile, were essential. The level of integration of missions was determined by the degree of stability. The most integrated mission to date was in Afghanistan, followed by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) where there had been good integration at the top along with fully integrated but still flexible coordination of humanitarian assistance as required by emergency situations. There had been close cooperation within the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), but there had not been full integration because peace had not been restored.

59. Summing up the panel discussion, she said that the United Nations must reform itself in order to play the role expected of it by Member States. Over the past 10 years the emphasis had moved from responding to humanitarian crises to providing humanitarian and development assistance taken together, which showed a new maturity in the Organization's efforts to deal with problem situations, including transitional situations. Traditional humanitarian and development coordination instruments were being broadened to include all spheres of United Nations activity and it was essential that coherent leadership be ensured in the field.

60. Governments bore the greatest responsibility in development efforts and required support for capacity-building in transitional situations. They were trying to respond to crises and rebuild their countries at the same time, and it was therefore essential that the international community should implement well-conceived programmes which involved long-term planning, including disaster mitigation, took into account environmental concerns and did not interfere with local coping mechanisms. Donors should not only provide funding but allow flexible use of those funds in the context of coordinated policy frameworks intended to further the transition agenda. In addition to donors and governments, civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations, and the private sector must be closely involved in humanitarian and development activities; in the case of disasters, for example, representatives of the local Red Cross or Red Crescent societies were always first on the scene. New models for action must also be developed by all stakeholders. At Headquarters, the driving force for a fully integrated approach for political, peacekeeping and humanitarian activities, in both crisis and transition situations, was the Secretary-General himself.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

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Economic and Social Council

Provisional
15 October 2002
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Humanitarian affairs segment

Provisional summary record of the 27th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 17 July 2002 at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Buallay (Vice-President) ..... (Bahrain)

Contents

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

02-48823 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Šimonović (Croatia), Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/57/77-E/2002/63 and A/57/97-E/2002/76)

1. **Ms. Msechu** (Observer for the United Republic of Tanzania) said that her delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the observer for Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Over the past decade natural disasters had affected some 215 million people. She therefore welcomed the strengthening of the regional presence of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which would facilitate timely responses to humanitarian emergencies, although there was also a need to increase capacity in order to ensure a stronger response. In that connection, she trusted that the international community would respond appropriately to the famine currently ravishing the southern Africa subregion, so as to avoid more serious consequences. The strengthening of the OCHA regional presence must go hand in hand with capacity-building for governments and local populations, particularly in the areas of contingency planning and regional coordination.

2. In situations of armed conflict, one of the key challenges was to ensure that combatants were separated from civilians. It was, however, unrealistic in cases of large-scale flights of people to expect overwhelmed countries of asylum, particularly poor developing countries, to distinguish between bona fide asylum-seekers and armed combatants. The problem needed to be addressed by the entire international community, with the United Nations providing the necessary leadership. The time had come for the Organization to draw up a comprehensive framework for assistance and support to countries of asylum. In that connection, she paid tribute to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the technical assistance provided to her Government.

3. She noted with satisfaction the recommendation made in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/57/77-E/2002/63) that the views of women should be sought on all issues relevant to humanitarian crises and commended the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for continuing to mainstream gender into the humanitarian response to emergencies. There was also a need to increase the number of women in decision-making positions, as managers, designers and planners of humanitarian strategies.

4. Most countries in the southern Africa subregion were reeling from the effects of one natural disaster after another. That situation demanded more focused attention and enhanced resource flows. The United Nations, for its part, must pursue its efforts to respond to humanitarian crises. Success in that area depended on coordinated action and timely and effective interventions guided by the principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality.

5. **Mr. Manis** (Sudan) associated his delegation with the statement by the observer for Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Because of his country's experience and its cooperation with the United Nations and the international community through Operation Lifeline Sudan, he attached particular importance to the humanitarian affairs segment of the Council's work. It was important to bear in mind that humanitarian assistance should only be provided at the request of the State concerned and with its agreement, and on a basis of impartiality and neutrality which fully respected that State's sovereignty, its laws and its territorial integrity.

6. The consolidated appeals process had proved its effectiveness as a mechanism for planning and coordinating humanitarian assistance. However, the recent fall in the level of response to the appeals for such assistance, which in some cases had been as low as 10 per cent of estimated requirements, had become a matter of concern. Unless that shortfall could be remedied, the future of humanitarian action by the United Nations system might be jeopardized.

7. Experience had shown that a large part of the scarce resources available for humanitarian assistance was taken up by transport costs, in particular air transport. His delegation felt that alternatives such as transport overland and by river and rail should be considered, since they were not only cheaper but tended to be more efficient, particularly for bulk consignments. It was also desirable, as far as possible, to purchase food and other supplies locally, either in the State concerned or in a neighbouring State.

8. The problem of internally displaced persons which had recently become more acute as a result of the growing number of conflicts and natural disasters was primarily one problem for individual governments to deal with. In the Sudan, for example, the State had devised rules on the basis of the values of hospitality that were characteristic of the Sudanese community and had successfully integrated displaced persons into the local communities and involved them in decision-making. Other countries had also sought appropriate means of addressing the problem. He called in that connection for an exchange of experiences, so that member States might draw up a list of points of disagreement with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, with a view to reflecting any necessary changes in the final text.

9. Since national authorities and local groups addressed the consequences of the 80 per cent or more of natural disasters which did not come to the notice of the international community, his delegation welcomed the appeal in the Secretary-General's report for capacity-building at the local, national, subregional and regional levels. Some disasters followed a recurring pattern. For example, when a particular region suffered from drought, emergency assistance was mobilized until the climatic conditions improved, but, when the drought returned a few years later, emergency assistance was again provided. In order to break that vicious cycle it might be appropriate for the United Nations and the international community to study radical solutions to ensure sustainable means of subsistence for local people that might make them less vulnerable to such cycles of drought and to other natural disasters.

10. The Secretary-General's report drew attention to the importance of objective and neutral information in conflict prevention. In that connection, he noted that the Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) was due to expand its broadcasting activities and that his Government had repeatedly called on IRIN, to no avail, to reconsider its methods of work because they were characterized by a resort to provocation.

11. The worst human disaster of recent years was taking place in occupied Palestine, perhaps the most serious feature of which was that emergency humanitarian assistance was prevented from reaching the refugee camps. Crimes had also been committed in the camps in Jenin and elsewhere in Palestine which his delegation had expected to see mentioned in the report. However, while the problems encountered in providing emergency assistance in other parts of the world were discussed, nothing was said of the plight of the Palestinian people.

12. **Mr. Martins** (Angola) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the observer for Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He noted with satisfaction that the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/57/77-E/2002/63) highlighted the efforts of his Government to incorporate the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in its legislation and policy. His Government was committed to applying sound internationally accepted principles in dealing with humanitarian crises.

13. The international response to humanitarian emergencies, whether caused by natural disasters or man-made, should be commensurate with their scale, impact and duration. Regrettably, in the case of long-running conflicts, donor fatigue often set in. He appealed to the international community to respond with equal vigour to the forgotten crises in the world, particularly those in Africa.

14. More than 5 million people were affected by the current humanitarian emergency in Angola. Earlier in the year, OCHA had launched the consolidated appeal for Angola to fund 130 projects in 13 sectors. While his delegation was grateful to all Member States that had responded positively to the appeal, thus far OCHA had received only 34 per cent of the total amount requested. Angola currently had a unique and unprecedented opportunity to consolidate peace. The resources requested not only would alleviate the plight of millions of Angolans but would also contribute to the process of national reconciliation. It was thus crucial for Member States to respond adequately. His Government had stepped up its own role in the provision of humanitarian assistance. Over the past two years, it had progressively increased the level of resources allocated to the social sector, including for emergency assistance. That increase had been made possible through enhanced cooperation with the international donor community.

15. **Mr. Kiniger-Passigli** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the mission of ILO was to promote opportunities for men and women everywhere to obtain decent and productive work in

conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity. Through its Infocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS), established in 1999, ILO promoted employment-friendly reconstruction and helped to save existing jobs and create new ones. In so doing, it had built a body of knowledge on crisis response, preparedness and prevention.

16. Over the past three years, IFP/CRISIS had been at the forefront of crisis response and reconstruction activities worldwide. As a result of the cooperation between ILO and other partners, the employment dimension had been mainstreamed into reconstruction programmes in those areas. Unfortunately, such programmes had not always secured donor funding. Clearly more needed to be done to ensure the timely provision of resources for transitional and development activities. In particular, major emphasis should be placed on bringing employment concerns to the forefront of the disaster and crisis management cycle.

17. The persistent marginalization of employment issues in relation to crises was evident in the coordination arrangements among operational agencies. While ILO was now fully represented in the United Nations Development Group, it was not part of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs or the Executive Committee on Peace and Security. Nor did it participate in the work of IASC, even though it was vital that an organization which was a major partner in emergency and development programmes around the world should be fully represented in that primary policy coordination mechanism.

18. Recent experience had shown the great potential of cooperation between ILO and other partners in the field. In that connection, it was important for the Organization to be an active participant in United Nations disaster management teams, to take part in joint needs assessment and planning missions and to be fully integrated in the preparation and maintenance of contingency plans.

19. In post-crisis environments, the situation was more positive. ILO was contributing fully to the United Nations structures established in Afghanistan, East Timor and Kosovo. It was also a full-fledged participant in the country-level process of inter-agency strategic coordination and resource mobilization. It took part in the development of common humanitarian action plans, and it had appealed through the consolidated appeals process for over $22 million in 2002.

20. The challenge of assisting millions of dispossessed people worldwide could not be met exclusively through traditional humanitarian assistance. A major element of the crisis response promoted by ILO was the socio-economic integration of crisis-affected people through the formulation and implementation of programmes that promoted job creation and income generation. ILO was working in partnership with United Nations agencies and international institutions to affirm the centrality of employment in crisis response and to integrate employment concerns in their work.

21. **Mr. Waki** (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that the UNFPA Humanitarian Response Unit was now fully operational. The Unit would contribute to increased coordination and effectiveness and to meeting the special reproductive health needs of two vulnerable groups, women and adolescents, who continued to be underserved. As an active member of IASC, UNFPA remained committed to strengthening the consolidated appeals process and fully supported the relevant recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/57/77-E/2002/63).

22. Over the past year, UNFPA had been very active in the humanitarian field in cooperation with a wide range of partners, including other United Nations agencies, Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It had strengthened its cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with a view to providing reproductive health care for refugees and internally displaced persons and reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS. The Fund knew very well that the gap between emergency relief and long-term development must be closed and that building local capacity was the key. In East Timor, for example, it was building on past emergency efforts to ensure that quality reproductive health services were available to the citizens of the newly independent nation.

23. There had been a strong united response from the United Nations system to the conflict in Afghanistan and the crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory. In Afghanistan, UNFPA was collaborating closely with

the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Public Health to improve maternal and child health facilities, train health workers and equip maternity hospitals. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, emergency obstetric care was inaccessible to most women in labour, and delays at checkpoints had resulted in unattended roadside births and even the deaths of some women and infants. Therefore, UNFPA had called for access to medical care and had trained midwives, distributed clean delivery kits and established a telephone hotline to assist with home deliveries.

24. The Great Lakes region remained a priority area for UNFPA humanitarian efforts. In the war-ridden Democratic Republic of the Congo, sexual violence was widespread and was being used as a weapon of war, while pregnancy and delivery complications were among the leading causes of death for displaced women and girls. UNFPA had provided relief by rehabilitating maternity hospitals, training health workers and setting up youth centres. In West Africa, the Fund was working with the United Nations Development Fund for Women and other partners to promote increased involvement of women in peacemaking and peace-building.

25. The global HIV/AIDS pandemic continued to spread. Sadly, young people were most at risk, especially girls. Stronger efforts were needed to prevent HIV infection in conflict situations if international development goals were to be met. Greater commitment and increased funding were absolutely essential. United Nations peacekeepers were on the front lines of HIV prevention. UNFPA was working actively with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other partners to train peacekeeping personnel on HIV prevention and gender awareness. Reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention were crucial issues during crisis situations. UNFPA was prepared to do its part in a coordinated effort with other humanitarian partners with a view to protecting and saving lives and restoring human dignity.

26. **Mr. Mugaas** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)), said that the twin themes of "reaching the most vulnerable" and "the transition from relief to development" were vital to IFRC in the context of coordination of humanitarian assistance.

27. The nature of crises was changing, and humanitarian interventions were often risky. Finding ways to gain access to isolated and vulnerable people was not easy. IFRC believed that the best way to cope with that problem was to prepare for such eventualities before emergencies arose. It was building the capacity of national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in disaster-prone areas with a view to strengthening their ability to recruit, train and manage volunteers and employees and help local communities improve their self-reliance. It had become aware of the limitations of such an approach, however: treating disasters as individual and isolated events did not take account of the need for comprehensive pre-disaster action in the form of preparedness, prevention and risk reduction. If such action was taken, the victims would be in a better position to return to normal life soon after a disaster.

28. IFRC placed great value on coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. It played an active role in IASC and was establishing specific agreements with a series of bodies and agencies. In the interests of improving operational responses and planning and coordination tools, IFRC had launched a study, the International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) project, whose task was not to create a new body of law, but to collect and analyse the legislation that already existed in that area. All too often, the provision of relief supplies in the aftermath of disaster was hampered by bureaucratic procedures, problems of physical access or lack of access to funds and telecommunications facilities. Although international humanitarian law was well established and codified, the same was not true of rules governing the response to natural disasters. The IDRL project aimed to foster greater awareness of such rules, to fill any gaps found, and to put together a body of legislation to form a framework for disaster response. The project's outcome would be presented to the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in December 2003, and because every single life saved was important, it was hoped that States and the Red Cross and Red Crescent family would support further work in that area.

29. **Mr. Paiva** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that IOM valued its participation in the consolidated appeals process, which was not only a resource mobilization tool, but also an instrument for strategic planning and programming. It was therefore puzzled by the often inadequate response to the appeals. However, it

remained committed to the exercise and welcomed the recent independent review.

30. He noted with satisfaction the establishment within OCHA of the Unit on Internal Displacement. The Unit was an important inter-agency effort which merited the strong support of the international community, and he trusted that the Council would endorse the recommendation to that effect in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/57/77-E/2002/63). IOM, for its part, had seconded an experienced staff member to the Unit.

31. Humanitarian emergencies were becoming more complex, with conflict increasingly being compounded by natural disaster. One such complex emergency was the situation in Afghanistan. Over the past year, IOM, at the request of OCHA, had taken over the management of camps for internally displaced persons in that country. Regrettably, funding difficulties had forced it to suspend temporarily several of its activities, demonstrating that more needed to be done to ensure that basic humanitarian relief needs continued to be met in situations of transition.

32. IOM had responded to recent allegations of sexual abuse committed by humanitarian workers in West Africa by strengthening its code of conduct so that it addressed more forcefully the specific issue of sexual abuse and the abuse of power that it represented. It was also discussing with its IASC partners additional measures to prevent the recurrence of such abuse in the future.

33. IOM remained committed to working with OCHA and its IASC partners to achieve better coordinated, more proactive and increasingly effective responses to humanitarian emergencies, responses that drew on the lessons learned over the past decade. It attached great importance to its participation in IASC and supported the ongoing efforts, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, to streamline IASC further in order to keep it focused and effective.

34. **Mr. Hamad** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)), said that the Dakar Framework for Action adopted by the World Education Forum held in April 2000 had committed its participants to meeting the needs of education systems affected by conflict and natural disasters and to using education to promote peace and tolerance and prevent violence and conflict. Education was an aspect of humanitarian action which was often overshadowed by the most immediate assistance needs, chiefly food, shelter and medicine. While UNESCO fully appreciated the necessary sequence of humanitarian aid, it took the view that, without educational support, the humanitarian assistance provided for the victims of natural and man-made disasters would not have a lasting effect. Graça Machel's 1996 report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children had concluded that educational support, and the stability and routine it provided, was a key part of children's emotional and psycho-social well-being. It encouraged donors to support education as part of humanitarian assistance, and it recommended specialized training for teachers working in situations of conflict.

35. Education was included in United Nations inter-agency consolidated appeals, but despite being recognized as part of the relief-to-development continuum, especially in protracted conflicts, it was not given sufficient consideration by donors. Regular meetings of donors were advisable, to consider trends in humanitarian response and ensure that imbalances in funding between various sectors of assistance were addressed. UNESCO firmly believed that its specific mandate within the United Nations system gave it a responsibility to assist those affected by conflict or disaster.

36. **Mr. Kastberg** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that the nature and magnitude of conflicts had changed, as most recent humanitarian crises had been internal conflicts triggered by human-rights violations and political disenfranchisement. A hallmark of such situations had been violations of the rights of children, who were frequent victims of violence, landmines, malnutrition and disease and often became deliberate targets and weapons in times of war. As international attention increasingly focused on the protection of civilians, however, legal obligations and political commitments had begun to provide a framework for protecting children in armed conflicts.

37. Those legal obligations, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child, guided UNICEF in its work to meet the survival, protection and development needs of children affected by conflict and natural disasters. Protection was an essential component of such action, and one facet of protection was providing health and education services. In

situations of conflict and disaster, education was a way to restore stability and security to children's lives. Protection also depended on access, something which OCHA had been able to secure by negotiation in a number of cases. Translating the commitment to protection into action required collaboration and cooperation within countries and internationally.

38. Ten years had passed since the General Assembly had adopted resolution 46/182 to provide a framework for humanitarian assistance, establishing four core mechanisms for coordination: the Emergency Relief Coordinator, IASC, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and the Consolidated Appeals Process. From the point of view of UNICEF, the advantage of those coordination mechanisms was that children's issues had been placed on the agenda of the wider humanitarian community. UNICEF could not handle all such issues by itself, and children had to be seen as the concern of everyone.

39. The General Assembly's Special Session on Children had been the culmination of a ten-year effort to focus attention on children. The challenge was to harness the momentum of the Special Session to protect and assist children in humanitarian crises, in order to build what in the words of the outcome document was a world fit for them.

40. **Mr. Enkhsaikhan** (Observer for Mongolia) endorsed the statement made earlier by the observer for Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He urged that the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (A/55/77-E/2002/63), which should be reflected in the draft resolution under preparation, should serve as guidance for future humanitarian activities.

41. The numerous humanitarian emergencies of the past ten years had placed a particular strain on the capacities and resources of the poorest developing countries. The situation called for the adoption of a broader regional approach to humanitarian aid and the strengthening of regional infrastructure. Moreover, capacity-building in preventing and coping with disasters at the local and national levels was of critical importance.

42. His Government fully supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that a broad "culture of protection" should be established, involving action in such areas as promotion of access, justice and reconciliation (A/55/77-E/2002/63, para. 30). While it agreed that the primary responsibility for protecting civilians lay with States themselves, international assistance was important, and it welcomed the establishment of the Unit on Internal Displacement within OCHA, especially since the number of internally displaced persons was rising.

43. Mongolia's recent experience of natural disasters led it to conclude that strengthening the consolidated appeals process would usefully contribute to mobilizing and coordinating assistance. It hoped that it would prove possible to reverse the decline in funding observed.

44. The much-discussed transition from relief to development would require a special effort in the field of education, as education was an important element in disaster prevention as well as in coping with the consequences of emergencies. The Secretary-General's recommendations should be expanded to emphasize that issue.

45. Mongolia had experienced two successive disastrous winters, affecting the economically vital livestock industry in particular. It was grateful to the United Nations and other donors for the assistance it had been given, and for the positive response to the 2001 joint appeal by the United Nations and the Government of Mongolia.

46. **Mr. Djerad** (Observer for Algeria) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance (A/55/77-E/2002/63) and endorsed the statement by the observer for Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The recent increase in complex humanitarian emergencies caused by armed conflict or natural disasters had made the issue of humanitarian response a complicated one. Despite the reform of the humanitarian activities of the United Nations and the improvement in coordination in that area, conflicts of interest, power play and selectiveness still threatened the principles of neutrality, universality, humanity and impartiality, especially in complex emergencies. It was important to remember that General Assembly resolution 46/182 provided the framework for international humanitarian assistance, and its principles should be respected.

47. Particularly in Africa, the seriousness of the situations which had developed made it essential to focus on the internal and external root causes of humanitarian emergencies rather than on such vague

concepts as a "culture of protection", the meaning of which needed clarification. Humanitarian assistance was above all a duty of solidarity.

48. The Secretary-General's report referred to the constant need to mobilize funds for humanitarian assistance, and it was a matter of concern that contributions were in decline. The shortage of resources threatened to paralyse the humanitarian activities of the United Nations and nullify the effect of the coordination arrangements that had been made. The consolidated appeals process remained the best method of mobilizing funding, and the United Nations needed to broaden the donor base while scrupulously ensuring that humanitarian concerns remained uppermost and no conditions or pressure were attached to the assistance. As to the development of a global humanitarian financial tracking system called for in paragraph 84 (x) of the Secretary-General's report (A/57/77-E/2002/63), his delegation had doubts over the scale and usefulness of such a system.

49. Against a background of increasingly frequent emergencies, humanitarian assistance contributions should not be made at the expense of reduced development aid. The arrangements for coordination of emergency assistance should stress involvement in capacity-building in the countries affected by disasters. The transition from relief to development was a vital but delicate and complex process which required constant coordination between the United Nations and other donors and the authorities of the country concerned. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the proposed establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict.

50. In closing, he said that humanitarian assistance remained an issue that required further analysis and discussion both in the Council and in the General Assembly.

51. **Mr. Rivas** (Observer for Colombia) expressed support for the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and said that the principles enshrined in General Assembly resolution 46/182, particularly neutrality, impartiality and the primary role of affected States must form the basis for all humanitarian assistance.

52. Both the report and the resolution adopted by the Council should highlight the importance of the transition from relief to development and of the active involvement of affected communities in that transition. Community participation and the strengthening of both local structures and the national institutional framework were often the best guarantee that assistance would reach the affected communities in a timely and efficient manner. He stressed the fundamental importance of coordination at all levels, particularly among the agencies of the United Nations system, in order to avoid duplication. The consolidated appeals process would be an effective tool to that end, particularly since it was elaborated in consultation with affected States.

53. Colombia was committed to human rights and the norms of international humanitarian law, in particular the protection of civilians, including the most vulnerable groups. Highlighting women's positive role in the peace and reconstruction processes, he stressed the need for continued mainstreaming of a gender perspective in humanitarian responses. He also called for the implementation of the commitments to provide humanitarian assistance to children and the elderly, undertaken at the two recent global conferences on those groups. His delegation strongly supported the initiative to elaborate a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

54. Colombia attached great importance to the issue of internal displacement, on which it maintained an open and transparent position. Its national policy on internal displacement promoted respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and the United Nations Guiding Principles and stressed prevention, humanitarian assistance, socio-economic rehabilitation, protection and institutional capacity-building. His Government had appealed to the international community for support in dealing with displaced communities in its national territory and was grateful to the World Food Programme (WFP), UNHCR, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for their assistance. In conclusion, his delegation, too, was concerned at the complaints of sexual abuse, exploitation and misappropriation of funds by humanitarian personnel and called for appropriate measures to be taken.

55. **Mr. Ibrahim** (Nigeria) said that his delegation supported the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Africa continued to be ravaged by a series of natural and complex humanitarian emergencies, ranging from drought, floods, and

earthquakes to armed conflict, all of which were compounded by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. While not all disasters could be prevented, improved contingency planning and preparedness would help to reduce their impact when they occurred. In that connection, he commended the work of the Inter-Agency Reference Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning and of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group. The coordinated response to environmental emergencies being developed by OCHA and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was also encouraging.

56. Since the beginning of the year, Nigeria had experienced several disasters, including the Lagos bomb explosion, the Kano plane crash and communal clashes in two states, resulting in hundreds of deaths and thousands of displaced persons. In every case, the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency had played the primary role in relief distribution and rehabilitation, but it had had to call on friendly countries to help in the disposal of unexploded bombs and ammunition after the Lagos incident. It was grateful to those countries and to United Nations agencies, IFRC and numerous international and local non-governmental organizations for their assistance.

57. Internal displacement in Nigeria was not one of the "forgotten crises" referred to in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening and coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/57/77-E/2002/63, para. 47); on the contrary, his Government was doing its utmost to help the affected persons. If the newly created Unit on Internal Displacement was to provide meaningful assistance to Nigeria, however, time was of the essence. While the coordinated efforts of United Nations agencies, NGOs, donors and ICRC had offered some degree of relief to the vulnerable in Africa, much remained to be done, particularly in the transition from relief to development. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, for example, jobless demobilized combatants roaming the streets might well indulge in criminal activities out of frustration and endanger the fragile peace. Top priority should be given to planning and implementing development projects, particularly the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises.

58. The Organization's efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance, particularly in Africa, could be enhanced through greater support for regional conflict prevention and resolution initiatives. Stressing the need to address the root causes of conflicts, including corruption, bad governance and poverty, he urged the United Nations, its agencies, donors and other stakeholders to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In conclusion, he requested OCHA to intensify its capacity-building programme in the areas of rescue and search, logistics support and contingency planning, particularly with a view to enabling developing countries to respond to emergencies and disasters in the critical first 24 hours before the international community intervened.

59. **Mr. Pradhan** (Bhutan) recalled that the observer for Venezuela, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, had emphasized that in providing humanitarian assistance the international community must abide by the guiding principles of General Assembly resolution 46/182 and must respect the principles of impartiality, neutrality and humanity. His delegation was concerned at the steady decline in the proportion of humanitarian assistance being channelled through the consolidated appeals process and hoped that that trend would be reversed as soon as possible.

60. Bhutan was located in one of the most geologically fragile mountain environments in the world, a region prone to earthquakes, heavy soil erosion, glacial lake outbursts and floods. Almost every year, monsoon rains led to floods and landslides causing heavy damage to infrastructure, disruption of communications and shortages of food and other supplies. Floods and soil erosion also affected large areas of India and Bangladesh, where one of the main causes of natural calamities was large-scale deforestation and unsustainable land use, particularly in mountainous areas. His Government had adopted a land use policy that reduced both flooding and soil erosion, preserving forest cover which stood at about 72 per cent of the total land area. That reduced the impact of natural disasters in both Bhutan and neighbouring countries, and Bhutan would maintain that environmental approach in the future.

61. In closing, he said that many natural disasters could be prevented or their impact reduced through the adoption of long-term measures to halt environmental deterioration and global warming.

62. **Ms. Ndhlovu** (South Africa) said that currently more than 12 million people in southern Africa faced starvation owing to a severe drought which was in its

third consecutive year, and any recurrence of the El Niño phenomenon would probably aggravate that situation. She appealed to Member States to answer to the fullest extent possible the consolidated national appeals for southern Africa, to be launched in the coming days and the emergency appeals of WFP.

63. Her delegation welcomed the efforts of OCHA to strengthen its regional activities, including in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It also commended the regional approach adopted by the entire United Nations system and the broader humanitarian community. Discussions of country assessment missions carried out by OCHA, WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the most seriously affected SADC countries, held during a June meeting of IASC, had proved to be extremely valuable. Her delegation welcomed the efforts to develop guidelines to expedite the work of international search and rescue teams through the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and hoped they would be adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. Rescue South Africa, an association of voluntary urban search and rescue experts, was working with the Advisory Group to host a meeting of international search and rescue experts in South Africa later in the year.

64. Her delegation hailed the Secretary-General's call for a "culture of protection". While primary responsibility for protection rested with the affected Member States, the broader international community must provide all reasonable political and humanitarian support. She referred, in particular, to the Secretary-General's appeal that the humanitarian needs of the vulnerable should be delinked from the larger political debates surrounding a certain country or region. That was particularly true of the humanitarian crisis in southern Africa. In that connection, her delegation welcomed the establishment of the Unit on Internal Displacement and the incorporation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement into the legislation of a growing number of African countries. Addressing the fundamental socio-economic needs of human beings through international cooperation would remove one of the root causes of armed conflict. The aims and objectives of NEPAD should be incorporated into humanitarian assistance with a view to reducing poverty and promoting the self-reliance and stability of the affected populations. The Africa Action Plan, adopted by the Group of Eight in support of NEPAD, would be of major importance in assisting vulnerable populations in humanitarian crises.

65. **Ms. Cruz** (El Salvador) expressed support for the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The earthquakes in El Salvador had been yet another instance of the developing countries' heightened vulnerability to natural disaster. Indications that the country could expect another cycle of the El Niño phenomenon highlighted the need for preparedness, capacity-building and contingency planning. Her delegation agreed with the Secretary-General's statement in his report that humanitarian action meant not only responding to crises and disasters but also being prepared to cope with them. In that connection, the Inter-Agency Reference Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning should include disaster prevention and mitigation, preparedness and response planning in its regional planning systems. While the conceptual framework for a coordinated and integral approach was promising, new effective mechanisms to that end must be further discussed and analysed. Her delegation welcomed the regional seminars and workshops organized with a view to improving coordination and communication between governments and the United Nations humanitarian assistance system. It also called for enhanced coordination of the work of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams. Similarly, the members of IASC must work together more closely with a view to improving inter-agency planning in the United Nations system, thereby contributing to, inter alia, the efficient use of limited resources.

66. She stressed the importance of: guaranteed access to vulnerable populations, for which the affected State bore primary responsibility; the principles embodied in General Assembly resolution 46/182 as a basis for humanitarian assistance; and the Secretary-General's concept of a "culture of protection". The international community must mobilize additional resources for humanitarian assistance and address imbalances among sectors and the impact of reduced multilateral financing, which hampered implementation and coordination of programmes. Lastly, she said that the consolidated appeals process, a vital tool for coordination and strategic planning, must be more inclusive, giving all actors an opportunity to participate.

67. **Mr. Kulyk** (Ukraine) said that Ukraine, being prone to various natural hazards, had established cooperative arrangements with regional partners with a view to ensuring a timely, adequate and effective response to natural disasters. It was, for example, participating in a joint regional project with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on civil emergency planning and disaster preparedness and management and establishing mutual warning mechanisms with civil defence and emergency structures in neighbouring countries. His delegation agreed that access to vulnerable populations in humanitarian emergencies, particularly internally displaced persons, women, children and the elderly and disabled, was of paramount importance, and it supported the Secretary-General's call for the establishment of a "culture of protection". It took note of the findings of the independent review of the consolidated appeals process and supported the recommendations on strengthening and improving the process.

68. Sixteen years after the Chernobyl disaster, its impact continued to affect the lives of millions of people. Ukraine attached special importance to the role of the United Nations in strengthening international cooperation to mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and appreciated the tireless efforts of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl, as well as the activities of the OCHA and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl to that end. The new United Nations strategy on Chernobyl, "A Strategy for Recovery", which focused on the transition from relief to development, was a vital framework for optimizing assistance from the international community. His Government looked forward to the early implementation of the specific projects comprising the new strategy, which it would make every effort to facilitate. Increased donor involvement and support for the implementation of the Chernobyl project would be crucial. On 25 June, the Chernobyl web site, an international communications platform on the long-term consequences of the disaster, had been launched in Geneva, Kiev and Minsk. He expressed his delegation's sincere gratitude to the Government of Switzerland for designing and implementing the project.

69. **Mr. Francis** (Observer for Jamaica) said that the frequency, scope and severity of natural disasters had increased significantly over the past decade with devastating effects on millions of people, particularly in the developing world. Climate change had played a major role in growing environmental challenges which had undermined development, most especially in those countries having a limited capacity to respond effectively. Effective and integrated humanitarian responses to natural disasters and to the tragedies caused by armed conflicts were essential for the countries directly affected and for the international community in general. The regional repercussions of humanitarian crises clearly pointed to the urgent need for strengthened regional structures and to the importance of linking early-warning responses and preparedness capacities at the regional level. The United Nations should support regional organizations in order to strengthen their capacities to respond to humanitarian crises and natural disasters.

70. Projections showing that the world would face increasing numbers of climatically-related natural disasters were particularly significant for small island developing States, which were exceedingly vulnerable to such disasters. The resulting devastation represented a serious threat to sustainable development, given the limited response capacities and resource bases of those States. His delegation therefore welcomed the planning processes being undertaken by United Nations agencies in that area.

71. The ongoing large-scale humanitarian operations in conflict zones highlighted the changed environment in which humanitarian assistance was provided. Central to the role of the Organization was the need for crisis prevention and adoption of measures to address the root causes of crises before they developed. The ability of the humanitarian community to respond effectively to emergencies depended to a significant degree on the ability to reach vulnerable populations. The continued deliberate targeting of vulnerable groups in conflict areas pointed to an urgent need to promote respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. Every effort should be made to cooperate with other organs of the United Nations system to improve the environment for the safe and secure provision of humanitarian assistance by improving legal and physical protection for humanitarian personnel and calling on armed groups to respect the provisions of international law.

72. The transition from relief to development was particularly relevant in the case of humanitarian assistance. Urgent and concerted efforts were required to move as quickly as possible to a comprehensive humanitarian and development assistance programme so as to reduce future risks. His delegation stressed the importance of encouraging humanitarian strategies to identify and support engagement with local structures and institutions. It also favoured the continued use of the consolidated appeals process as a coordination, strategic planning and advocacy tool.

73. **Mr. Theron** (Observer for Namibia) said that the Secretary-General had rightly pointed out in his report that the southern African region was being affected by natural disasters for the third consecutive year. The situation had worsened owing to persistent drought and erratic rainfall and many population groups, especially in remote areas, suffered drought-related food insecurity. In an effort to ensure a high level of preparedness, his Government had created an emergency management unit to implement and coordinate operations with the aim of saving lives and reaching the most vulnerable. The unit was successfully coordinating relief programmes, such as "food for work" for able-bodied adults and free food distribution for vulnerable groups. Other government measures to respond to emergency needs included borehole drilling and financial assistance to farmers affected by the drought.

74. Although Namibia was faced with food shortages owing to erratic rainfall, it had always been ready to assist its neighbours and was hosting a number of refugees and providing other means of humanitarian assistance when possible. The combination of natural disasters, widespread hunger, chronic poverty, and the devastating effect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the southern African region called for swift action from all relevant agencies and the donor community, and the effective coordination of funds. He called on Governments, donor countries, financial institutions and humanitarian agencies to recognize the importance of getting urgently needed assistance to the vulnerable in complex emergencies.

75. **Mr. Kazemi Kamyab** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation associated itself with the earlier statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He commended the report of the Secretary-General for the way in which it dealt with many aspects of emergency humanitarian assistance, including transition from relief to development. A new vision was needed to ensure that vulnerability was mitigated by helping to bridge the gap between those two activities. The development role of the United Nations system and the effectiveness of its development activities must be strengthened.

76. Capacity-building was a major component of all efforts to limit the negative effects of disasters. The United Nations system should play a very prominent role in that context. The magnitude and duration of many emergencies were such that international cooperation was indispensable in addressing such situations, but strong national capacity could lead to better coordination in the face of humanitarian emergencies. The need for adequate financial resources could scarcely be over-emphasized.

77. His delegation supported the efforts of OCHA to strengthen its regional presence in order to provide more effective assistance to disaster-prone countries and better coordinate and develop existing response mechanisms. It also welcomed efforts to expedite the work of international urban search and rescue operations.

78. The plight of refugees was a persisting phenomenon with global dimensions requiring an urgent global response. The situation of refugees and displaced persons could hardly find a more telling example than that of the oppressed Palestinian people. The international community must take a strong position against the policies of systematic destruction of Palestinian homes and the simultaneous expansion of settlements in the occupied territories. It was the occupation of Palestinian land, the root cause of the calamity affecting the Palestinian people, which should be addressed.

79. His Government was glad that the international community had committed itself to strengthening international cooperation, including burden-sharing and coordination of humanitarian assistance to countries hosting refugees. Providing assistance to internally displaced persons was not a core function of United Nations offices and agencies and should await the finalization of a legal document defining such persons and the mandate of the relevant United Nations institutions.

80. Lastly, his delegation commended the leading role played by the United Nations and its humanitarian operations in Afghanistan, working towards the goal of

reconstruction and ultimately of development of that war-torn country.

81. **Ms. Mahouve Same** (Cameroon) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It welcomed the detailed recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report. The complex, multidimensional nature of current humanitarian situations had led many actors, including Governments and non-governmental organizations, to work in close collaboration. Over the past decade, conflicts and natural and environmental disasters had increased in frequency and intensity, leading to massive population displacements, innumerable acts of violence, considerable loss of human life and widespread destruction of socio-economic infrastructure. In order to lessen the impact of humanitarian crises, it was necessary to prevent armed conflicts by dealing with their underlying causes and establishing a culture of peace. Peace-building measures must be promoted in post-conflict periods, and early-warning systems were needed to alleviate the impact of natural and environmental disasters.

82. Most victims of crises and disasters lived in the developing countries, where demographic pressure and poverty often led the population to put themselves at risk from natural hazards. Africa had for many years been affected by numerous conflicts, which undermined its development. The AIDS epidemic had made the situation even worse. A more effective prevention strategy could save thousands of lives and considerable economic resources. Strong emphasis should be placed on regional crisis management capacities. Cameroon, for its part, had set up an inter-ministerial committee for the prevention of natural disasters and the protection of the affected population groups. The determination of African States to mobilize for peace and security must be matched by material and logistical support provided by increased international assistance. Few developing countries had the means to cope unaided with the humanitarian consequences of crises.

83. It was clear from the increasing numbers of civilians killed and the frequency and seriousness of attacks on humanitarian workers that the provisions of international law relating to human rights, refugees and humanitarian situations continued to be held in contempt. Accordingly, her delegation supported the principle of developing clearly defined procedures to identify and separate armed elements in situations of massive population displacement. It commended the rules established by the United Nations concerning protection and distribution mechanisms and protection against sexual abuse and exploitation and the misuse of humanitarian assistance.

84. The consolidated appeals process should lead to improved consultations among donors in their financing decisions. Her delegation supported the recommendation of the Secretary-General concerning the establishment of a global humanitarian financial tracking system.

85. **Mr. Percaya** (Observer for Indonesia) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the Observer for Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. His Government believed that humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, with the consent of the affected country and with respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national humanity of States as recognized in General Assembly resolution 46/182. In addition, the affected State should play the primary role in coordinating humanitarian relief efforts. His Government urged the Council to support recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, which advocated strengthening the consolidated appeals process and regional relief efforts, smoothing the transition from relief to development and protecting the most vulnerable.

86. The system for providing humanitarian assistance worldwide was under increasing stress, which exacerbated the inequality among crises. More must be done to ensure adequate resources for humanitarian assistance, but not by diverting funds from other goals such as sustainable development. It was important to strengthen the consolidated appeals process, reduce bilateralism, and strengthen regional cooperation and regional responses to crises. Once again, his Government urged the developed countries to live up to their commitments on official development assistance.

87. On the issue of transition from relief to development, donor funds dried up when a relief effort had ended because donors' rules for providing relief made no provision for promoting development. As a result, the people left behind were very vulnerable to the next crisis. That was where NGOs could have a substantial impact, since it was easy for them to be flexible in their rules about aid. As for the issue of

relief to the most vulnerable, his delegation reiterated the principle that the delivery of assistance should not compromise the sovereignty of the recipient country. In many instances, however, it was difficult for the recipient country to fully guarantee the safety of aid workers and the delivery of aid. In such circumstances the international community should work closely with Governments. His Government was also firmly convinced that internally displaced persons were an internal matter for each country and that international humanitarian assistance for such persons should therefore be delivered with the consent and cooperation of the affected country.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations E/2002/SR.28

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

14 October 2002

Original: English

Substantive session of 2002
Humanitarian affairs and general segments

Provisional summary record of the 28th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 17 July 2002, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Buallay (Vice-President) ..... (Bahrain)
later: Mr. Šimonović (President) ..... (Croatia)

Contents

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

Social and human rights questions

(g) Human rights

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/57/77-E/2002/63 and A/57/97-E/2002/76)

1. **Ms. Loemban Tobing-Klein** (Suriname), noting that the report of the Secretary-General mentioned efforts to strengthen regional response and local capacity-building for natural disasters in the Latin American and Caribbean region, said that the problems had been identified and that it was essential for the necessary resources to be made available to meet the needs of those who were victims.

2. The promotion of human rights was a prerequisite for sustainable development. Yet, unless the goal of 0.7 per cent of gross national product being allocated to official development assistance was attained, it would not be possible to ensure the basic rights of people worldwide. Nor would it be possible to implement the Millennium development goals or the Monterrey Consensus.

3. **Ms. Barnes** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta) said that the Order served the needy and sick in more than 110 countries. Its neutrality facilitated its work in situations that were difficult for other entities. Its Emergency Corps provided relief and executed long-term recovery projects in the context of natural disasters or armed conflicts. When possible, the Order carried out reconstruction and rehabilitation in following the acute phase of relief work. In the Balkans, its activities were extensive and were run in close cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It was conducting similar activities in the Great Lakes region of Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Honduras, El Salvador and India.

4. Through its Comité International de l'Ordre de Malte (CIOMAL), founded in 1958, the Order was active in combating leprosy as well as any disease and handicap which led to social isolation, including HIV/AIDS. It operated medical centres and dispensaries. Many of the latter institutions were in Lebanon and El Salvador, founded during armed conflict, and had become an important part of the respective national health systems. In addition, the Order supported and at times managed many hospitals and medical centres in developing countries. It had often been responsible for medical care during United Nations peace missions, including in the Balkans and Central America. It supported the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, which provided high-quality maternity care without discrimination and boasted the only neo-natal intensive care unit in Bethlehem. It looked forward to further coordination with the United Nations system and other interested parties in providing humanitarian aid to those in need.

5. **Mr. Harcharik** (Deputy Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that, in addition to providing technical assistance for agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development, FAO was a major partner in humanitarian assistance efforts, with active programmes in early warning, preparedness planning, emergency relief, recovery, rehabilitation and development. It had provided input for the report of the Secretary-General (E/2002/63), and he wished to emphasize three points contained in the report.

6. On the subject of vulnerability, he said that the effects of the increasing number of natural disasters and conflicts in recent years had been exacerbated by poverty and poor planning. Rural populations in the developing countries who depended on agriculture for their livelihoods were the worst affected by natural disasters and the least equipped to cope with them. Additional assistance must therefore be channelled to them through the agricultural sector.

7. Turning to the transition from relief to development, he welcomed the Secretary-General's call for early planning and programming of development assistance. Emergency relief should be delivered in a way mindful of the need for prompt reconstruction and development. FAO interventions sought to reduce dependency on food aid as soon as possible in order to prepare for development and restore the dignity of rural populations. Refugees and displaced farmers should be helped to return to their farms at the earliest opportunity or at least allocated plots of land in their new areas of residence. Making them self-sufficient reduced the burden on the host population and the risk of new conflict. Demobilized combatants likewise required training and land to become productive members of society and resist the temptation to turn to banditry.

8. In the area of resources, he expressed concern at the decline in support for the consolidated appeals process and emphasized the importance of improved

coordination among donors. FAO was looking for ways of ensuring seamless follow-through from emergency to post-emergency activities in its collaboration with other United Nations system agencies. To that end, it was seeking to strengthen such collaboration, especially at the field level and in post-emergency situations, with a view to making best use of the comparative advantages of each participating organization. Because prevention was less costly and difficult than reparation, it would be wise to provide increased funding for early warning and preparedness. Unfortunately, during the 1990s concessional aid for agriculture, which would benefit the most vulnerable, had declined by 50 per cent. In the interests of the most vulnerable groups, that worrisome trend needed to be reversed.

9. **Mr. Oshima** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that he had been impressed by the Council's constructive attitude in favour of strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) would continue to work with all stakeholders to overcome the daunting challenges posed by natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies. Humanitarian assistance must be delivered to affected populations rapidly and effectively, within the framework of international human rights and humanitarian law, including in situations of armed conflict. Humanitarian personnel must be permitted sustained access to victims, and their personal safety must be ensured. In conflict situations, negotiations must be undertaken with all parties, including non-State actors, to that end. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) would soon finalize and circulate guidelines on negotiations with armed groups for the provision of humanitarian assistance.

10. Protection of civilian populations was above all the responsibility of Member States, although all stakeholders should provide support. The proposed culture of protection was an important step in that regard, and work should continue to resolve practical problems at the international, regional, national and local levels. Core elements of a culture of protection included the right of civilian populations to assistance and protection and respect for international human rights and humanitarian and refugee law. In that context, he noted that regional workshops were being organized to share expertise and agree on practical measures to protect civilian populations. The occupied Palestinian territories provided an example of a situation where all parties must be encouraged to cooperate to protect civilian populations and meet their basic needs.

11. Humanitarian workers had a responsibility to observe the highest possible standards of conduct when dealing with vulnerable populations, and he deplored the shocking allegations of exploitation and abuse which had been made in West Africa. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee would address those problems and would develop in cooperation with invitees a plan of action to eliminate abuse and exploitation during humanitarian emergencies and to ensure accountability in that regard, in particular on the part of managers. He recognized that there were still some unresolved questions concerning the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and expressed support for the suggestion that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons should undertake further consultations on the subject. He welcomed the Council's endorsement of the newly created Unit on Internal Displacement.

12. Turning to the area of disaster preparedness, he said that the international community must assist vulnerable countries to improve their capacity, paying special attention to factors which increased vulnerability. A comprehensive disaster-risk-management approach must be implemented and integrated into development planning in a collaborative effort on the part of all agencies involved. In Asia, for example, Governments, agencies and non-governmental organizations had worked to pool their expertise. The World Summit on Social Development would also provide an opportunity to send a clear message on disaster preparedness and mitigation, and he hoped that that issue would be dealt with in its programme of action.

13. The scourge of HIV/AIDS continued to afflict millions, in particular in Africa, not only causing suffering but also reducing the ability of communities to cope with the crisis and limiting development overall. The spread of HIV/AIDS, which was accelerated during complex humanitarian emergencies, should be addressed through humanitarian aid programmes in a responsible manner with a view to the

adoption of long-term approaches by UNAIDS and other humanitarian partners.

14. Ensuring a successful transition from relief to development required a collaborative approach on the part of all stakeholders, in particular in areas where responsibilities overlapped. The local population must also be involved in identifying risks and priorities and implementing programmes, and the role of women must be strengthened. Since the relationship between humanitarian partners could impair or enhance relief operations, the best possible use must be made of resources in order to maximize their effectiveness. The consolidated appeals process could be expanded to include strategic planning and resource mobilization, an issue he would explore with development partners.

15. Concerns had been voiced regarding the lack of resources to meet humanitarian needs, poor prioritization, and donor conditionalities, while the need for broader partnerships had been emphasized. In order to remedy existing shortcomings, he would make consultations on the creation of a global humanitarian financing tracking system a priority but stressed that Member States must show a willingness to fund humanitarian action. In that context, he called for increased support for the consolidated appeals process.

16. The Council's humanitarian affairs segment would continue to play an important role in ongoing efforts to improve humanitarian assistance. He looked forward to the adoption by the Council of a draft resolution which would provide guidance for the coming year and reaffirmed his commitment to work closely with the Council to build on progress made.

17. **The President**, summarizing the debate which had taken place during the humanitarian affairs segment, said that the annual discussion provided continuity in addressing situations of natural disaster or emergency and highlighted the urgency of responding to them effectively and in a coordinated way. Some of the main issues touched on had been access to vulnerable populations, preventive measures in conflict situations, internal displacement, coordination, information, the establishment of a financial tracking system for humanitarian assistance, and the creation of a culture of protection.

18. *Mr. Šimonović (Croatia), President, took the Chair.*

Social and human rights questions

(g) Human rights (E/2002/68 and Add.1)

Statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

19. **Mrs. Robinson** (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), before introducing her final report to the Council (E/2002/68 and Add. 1), said that the fifty-eighth session of the Commission of Human Rights, which had taken place earlier in the year, had been a particularly difficult one which called for deep reflection. A number of positive initiatives had emerged, including a new mandate on the right to health, two new working groups to follow up on the World Conference against Racism, and a resolution to recommend an optional protocol to the Convention against Torture on preventive visits. Work would soon begin on consideration of an optional protocol to create an individual petitions mechanism on economic, social and cultural rights, a treaty on disappearances and an instrument to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

20. Some developments were less welcome, however. The Commission had been forced to operate under extraordinary organizational constraints, with no evening or night meetings. One benefit which had emerged had been the strengthening of the role and authority of its extended Bureau, which was in the long-term interest of the Commission. However, the burden of cuts in speaking time had been felt most by non-governmental organizations and special rapporteurs and experts. It was precisely those inputs that set the Commission apart from other intergovernmental forums. The extended Bureau and her Office were considering how to enhance the working methods of the Commission so that the burden of any reduction in time could be shared equitably between States and civil society representatives.

21. As to be expected following the tragedy of 11 September, the Commission on Human Rights had spent considerable time discussing terrorism and human rights but had been unable to reach a consensus on how to deal with the issue. Another focus of attention had been the terrible escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel. She had been requested to head a visiting mission to the area, but the necessary agreement of the Israeli authorities had not been forthcoming. Consensus had tended to

diminish as the session wore on and the number of statements and draft resolutions on the subject increased. It would be important for the Commission to give careful thought to ways of maximizing the value and effectiveness of its future deliberations on that grave situation.

22. A particularly troubling aspect of the session had been the unprecedented questioning of the Commission's human rights protection role, exacerbated by a marked increase in bloc voting. Regional solidarity was a poor response to evidence of serious human rights violations. Those who were critical of existing methods of addressing country situations had an obligation to propose credible alternatives. Where gross violations were identified, the Commission must have the capacity and courage to speak out on behalf of victims; it was the only body in the United Nations system which could speak in that way. In that regard, she had been greatly encouraged by the recent launch of the African Union, and its emphasis on the administration of justice, human rights, democracy and good governance. She also welcomed the support the Council was offering to African countries through the proposal for the ad hoc advisory group.

23. The influence of the Commission on Human Rights should not be limited to its annual session but should continually reach all United Nations system activities and the wider international stage. For that to occur, the Commission must enjoy the trust and respect of the international community, which required it to operate with the highest integrity. In other words, its credibility and effectiveness was in the hands of its elected members. She believed that membership brought with it obligations as well as rights, responsibilities as well as privileges. If members came to share that belief, then the Commission would truly be able to realize the great expectations of the international human rights community.

24. Turning to her report to the Council (E/2002/68 and Add.1), she said that it highlighted the rights of persons living with HIV/AIDS or with disabilities, and of indigenous people and dealt also with trafficking in persons.

25. Where the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS were concerned, the past year had been marked by an increased appreciation of the role of human rights and the realization of the right to health. Fuller integration of human rights obligations into national responses to HIV/AIDS was needed, and she welcomed the decision to appoint a Special Rapporteur on the right to health. Disability reform could be strengthened and accelerated if greater and more targeted use was made of human rights norms; for instance, a human rights approach would ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities were not forgotten when the implementation of the Millennium development goals was measured.

26. The commitments made in the Millennium development goals were of particular relevance to indigenous peoples, and ensuring their full participation in policy-making was one of the strategies needed to address the disparities in their well-being. The launch of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues had been an important step in ensuring their greater participation within the United Nations. The absence of financial and human resources to assist with the Forum's preparatory work was regrettable, however, and she urged the Council to allocate resources in the regular budget for that purpose. The Permanent Forum offered an exceptional opportunity to address the very real disadvantages faced by indigenous peoples.

27. The Millennium human rights goals included measures to ensure protection for the rights of migrants, and trafficking in human persons was a particularly abusive form of migration. One of the most significant outputs of her Office's trafficking programme was the Recommended Principles on Human Rights and Human Trafficking (E/2002/68/Add.1), which had been developed in response to the clear need for practical, rights-based policy guidance on the trafficking issue. Their purpose was to facilitate the integration of a human rights perspective into national, regional and international anti-trafficking laws, policies and interventions.

28. During her service as High Commissioner, she had seen a transformation in the approach to human rights, in the mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system of a rights-based approach to its work, in the strong links between human rights and human development and in the way that civil societies in every region were learning to use the commitments of Governments in ratifying human rights instruments as a means of securing transparent and participatory decision-making on economic and social issues. The major focus over the coming years must be on

developing and strengthening national protection systems, because it was at a national and local level that human rights were either protected or violated.

29. **Ms. Loemban Tobing-Klein** (Suriname) paid tribute to the High Commissioner for her dedication, for promoting the concept of human rights education as key to development and for her inclusion of the human rights perspective in every aspect of development.

30. **Mr. Reyes Rodriguez** (Cuba) said that, although his delegation had not always agreed with the High Commissioner, it had always respected her commitment, especially to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. He paid tribute to her personal efforts regarding the Durban Conference on racism and the situation of the Palestinian people.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.